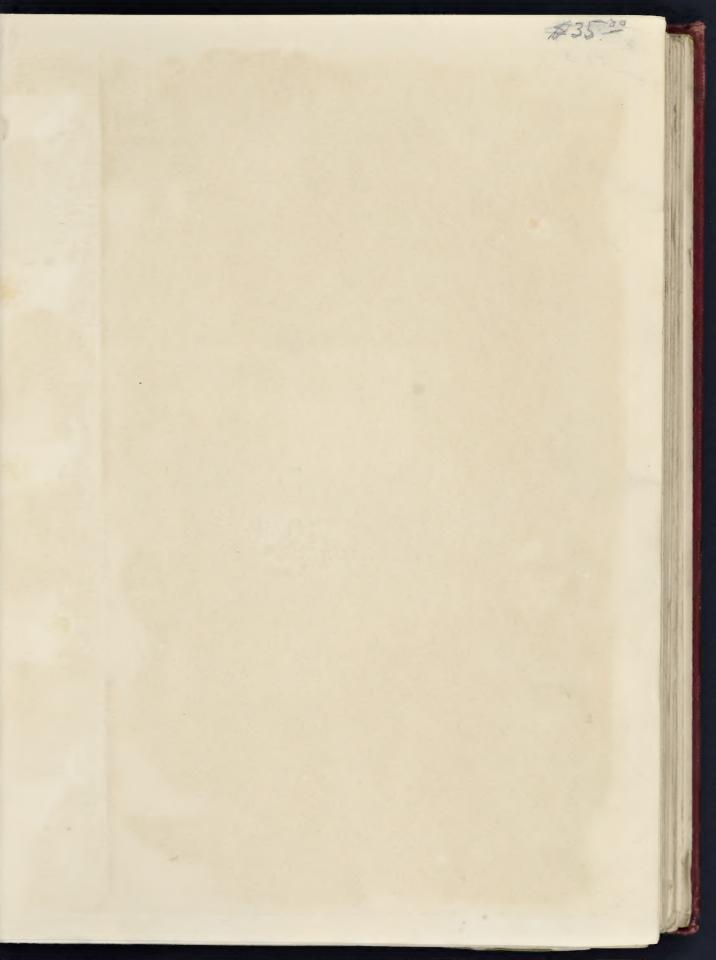
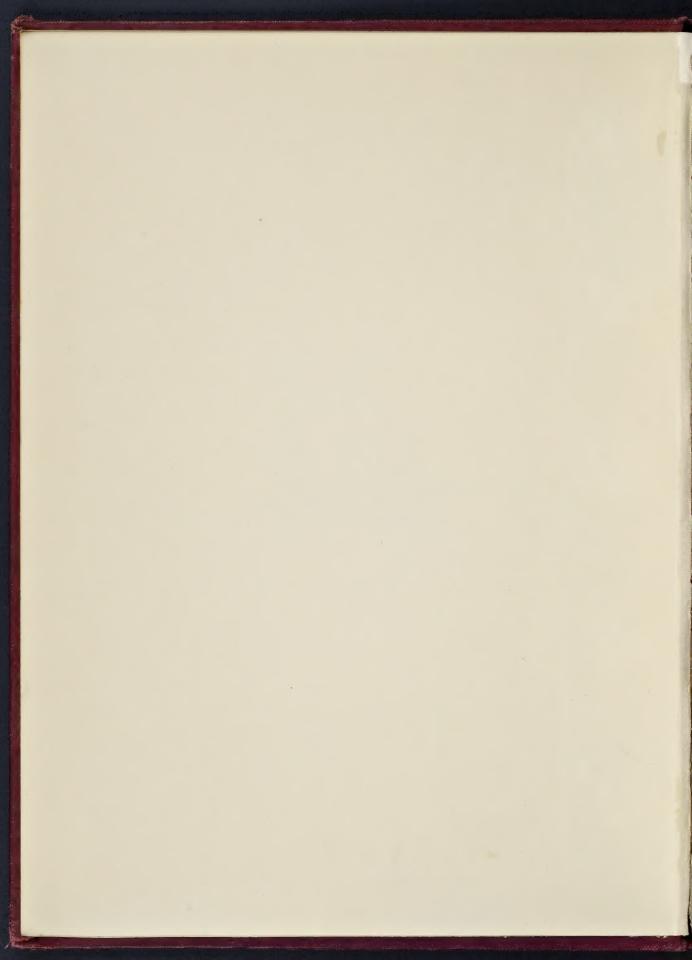
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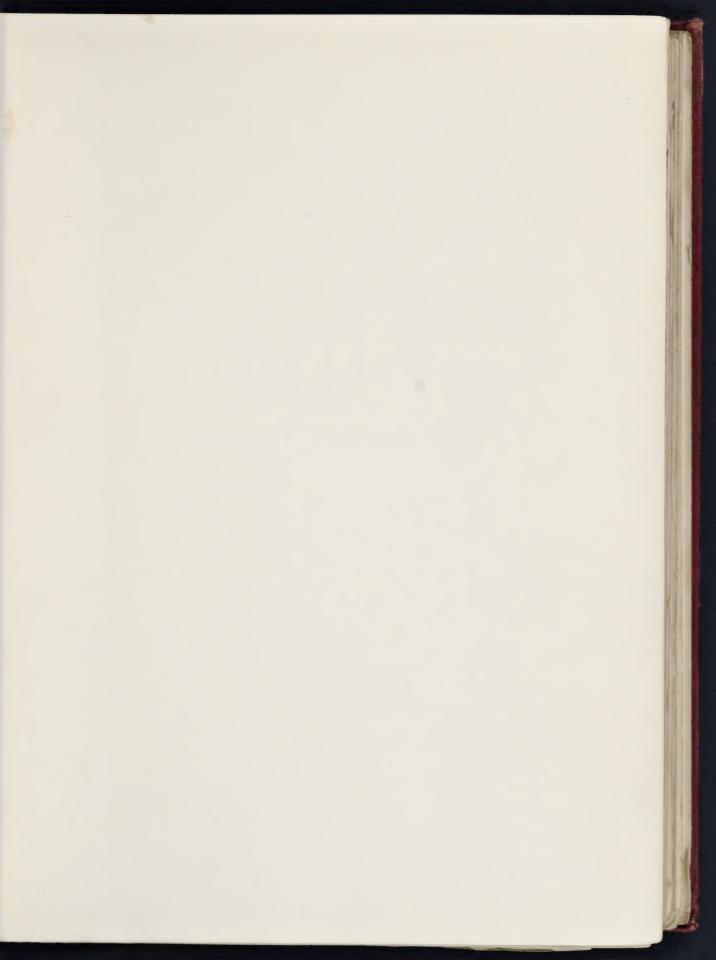
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ON LANDSCAPE PAINTING
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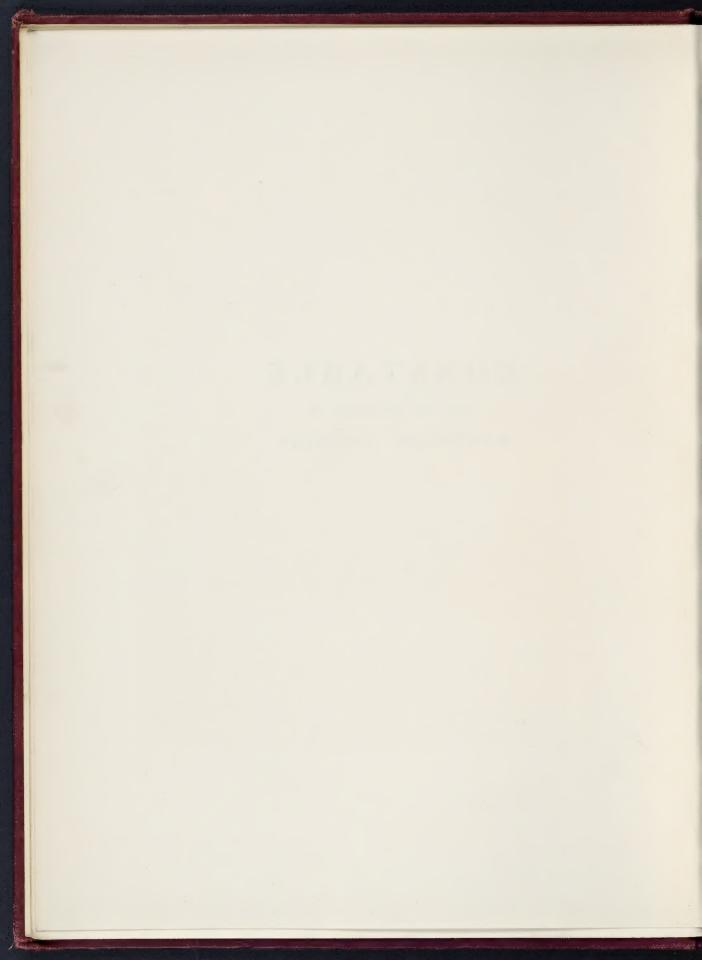
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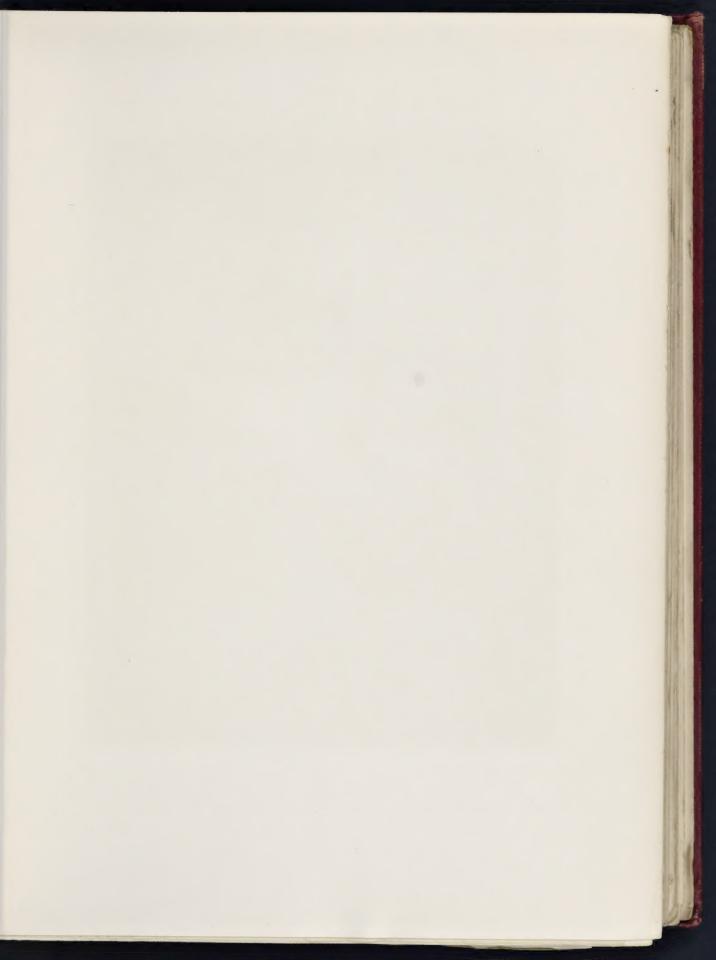
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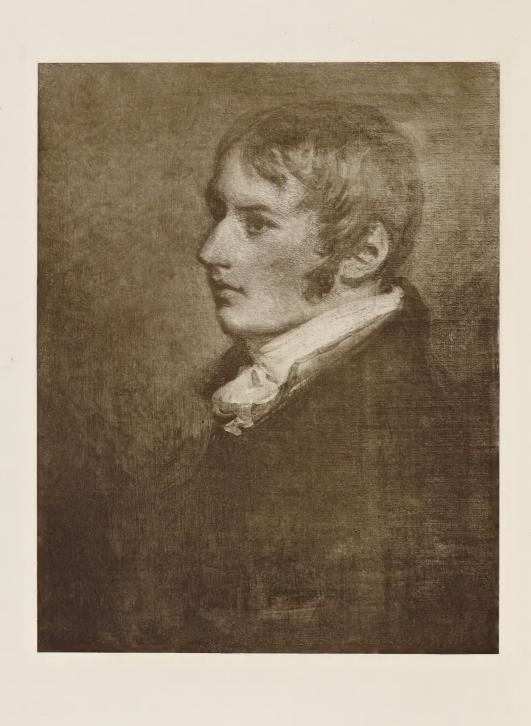
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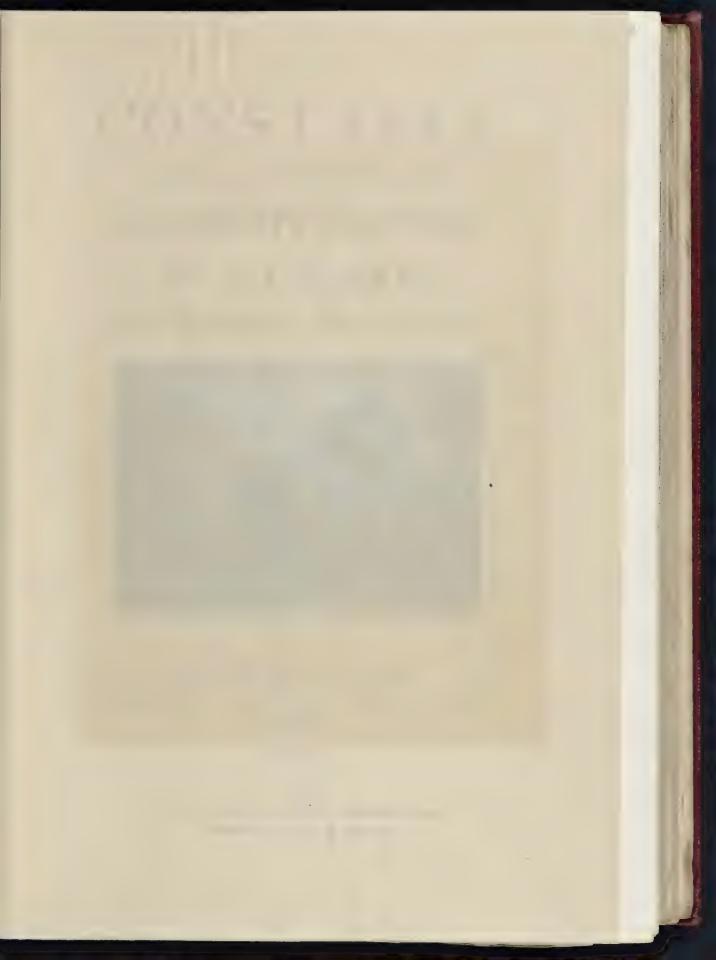
AND HIS INFLUENCE ON

LANDSCAPE PAINTING









JOHN CONSTABLE AT THE AGE OF TWENTY.

Painted by Daniel Gardner in 1796. South Kensington.

CONSTABLE

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AND HIS INFLUENCE ON

LANDSCAPE PAINTING

BY C. J. HOLMES

With Seventy-Seven Photogravure Plates



WESTMINSTER

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PREFACE



HE aim of the present book is to be not so much a biography as a critical study. Leslie's well-known work was so excellently composed that as far as Constable's personal history is concerned, it remains an almost perfect chronicle, even after the lapse of more than half a century. Nowadays, however, Constable's domestic affairs are hardly as interesting to us as

they were to his friends sixty years ago; while the history and quality and genuineness of his pictures, his theory and practice of painting, and the causes, nature, and results of the modern naturalistic movement of which he was the pioneer are constantly discussed.

While, then, no pains have been spared to give an accurate and impartial account of Constable's life and character, the main portion of this book has been devoted, first to tracing briefly the rise of naturalism in landscape up to the time of Constable's youth; then to studying very carefully the influences under which the painter developed his own personal genius, and to examining thoroughly the true character of his achievement; and lastly to considering the variations and extensions of Constable's practice, which have had so much influence, whether for good or for evil, upon the landscape painters of to-day, both in Britain and on the Continent.

Such a study cannot be complete without being to some extent technical; and, to make the technical points clear, the work has been illustrated with a long series of photographs taken specially to show the peculiar characteristics of Constable's technique, and the order in which the various elements of his genius were evolved.

The number of Constable's studies is so enormous, and they are so widely scattered, that a full catalogue of them would be the work of more than one lifetime. The Chronological List of Constable's Pictures and Sketches

PREFACE

appended to the book is thus a mere foundation, but it has been carefully arranged to give as much help as possible to those who, having sketches or pictures of their own, would like to find out something about them, by comparing them with other examples whose date is known. The List includes only two or three works which I have not personally examined during the last few years.

I have to thank Messrs. Agnew for their efforts to trace several pictures which have recently changed hands, Mr. Leggatt for similar kindness in connection with the papers in the possession of the Constable family, and Mr. Laurence Binyon, Messrs. Foster and Sons, Mr. Roger E. Fry, Mr. Gooden, Mr. H. P. Horne, Mr. E. G. Howe, Mr. Charles Ricketts, and Mr. G. H. Wallis for help in many different ways. May I also thank the numerous owners of pictures who have allowed me to examine their collections, and especially the Council of the Royal Academy, Mr. Arthur Kay, Miss Lloyd, Sir Samuel Montagu, Messrs. Obach and Company, Mr. James Orrock, Sir Charles Tennant, The Unicorn Press, and Mr. A. Young for permission to reproduce pictures or make use of photographs in their possession? The collection of letters and papers contained in Leslie's biography has been of invaluable service, since many of the originals are no longer accessible.

The photographs of Mr. Orrock's two pictures were taken by Mr. William E. Gray, and that of Messrs. Obach's picture by Messrs. Dixon. All the rest of the photographs were taken by Mr. Augustin Rischgitz, to whose skill and patience the results attained are due.

C. J. H.

September 1902.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
	INTRODUCTION, . ,	I
CHA		
Ι.	THE TRADITION OF LANDSCAPE.	
	The aim of art: Its technical processes: The development of	
	oil-painting: The Primitives: Titian: Rubens: The Dutch	
	landscape painters: The subject-matter of landscape: Its	
	functions compared with those of figure painting,	pr.
		5
Π.	THE PREDECESSORS OF CONSTABLE.	
	The rise of Naturalism: The Venetians: Claude and Salvator Rosa:	
	The Masters of the Netherlands: Decline of the naturalistic	
	spirit : Wilson and Gainsborough,	27
		-/
HII.	THE CONDITION OF LANDSCAPE DURING CONSTABLE'S	
	YOUTH.	
	The foundation of the Royal Academy: Morland and James Ward:	
	Crome and Cotman: Water-colour painting: Girtin and Turner, .	. 6
	orome and comman. Water-colour painting. Ontin and Turner, .	46
IV.	CONSTABLE'S LIFE, 1776-1810,	58
V.	,, 1811-1825,	75
VI.	,, 1826-1837,	0.0
	,, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	92
VII.	THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONSTABLE'S ART.	
	Early influence of Claude, Ruysdael, and Girtin: The study of Reynolds	
	leads to increased technical skill: The development and character	
	of Constable's mature style: The painting of his later years, its	
	virtues and defects,	112
	1	113
	ix	

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
VIII.	ENGRAVINGS AFTER CONSTABLE'S WORK.	
	Constable's own etchings: David Lucas and the 'English Landscape	
	Scenery': Plates after Constable by other engravers up to the	
	present time,	128
IX.	CONSTABLE'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS PAINTING.	
	Mr. Ruskin's criticism of Constable: Its falsity: Constable's love of	
	Nature: His likes and dislikes: His knowledge of the Old Masters:	
	His critical powers,	140
X.	CONSTABLE'S PLACE AS AN ARTIST.	
	Constable's powers and limitations as a thinker and as a draughtsman,	
	a colourist and a designer: His historical importance,	161
XI.	CONSTABLE'S SUCCESSORS ON THE CONTINENT.	
	The true origin of the romantic revolt in France, and Constable's share	
	in it: Géricault: Delacroix: Rousseau: Corot: Millet: Courbet:	
	The Impressionistes: The modern Dutch Masters: Segantini:	
	Meunier: Puvis de Chavannes,	177
XII.	CONSTABLE'S SUCCESSORS IN GREAT BRITAIN.	
	Feebleness of British Landscape after Constable's death: Cox, De	
	Wint, and Müller: The Pre-Raphaelites: Mason, Walker, and Cecil	
	Lawson: British marine painting: The influence of Japan: The	
	leaders of modern landscape: The present tendency of painting in	
	England: Its danger,	205
	Appendix A. Engravings after Constable's Work,	219
	" B. Priced Catalogue of Constable's Sale in 1838,	227
	" C. Forgeries of Constable's Work,	234
	,, D. Chronological List of Constable's Chief Pictures and	
	Dated Sketches,	238

FULL-PAGE PLATES

JOHN CONSTABLE AT THE AGE OF TWENTY. Painted by Daniel		
	Frontispie	ce.
A STUDY OF THE NUDE MALE FIGURE. About 1800. From the Chalk		
Drawing at South Kensington	Facing page	4
DEDHAM VALE. September 1802. From the Oil-Painting at South Kensington	23	8
ON BARNES COMMON. About 1805. From the Oil-Painting in the National		
Gallery	33	12
FARM BUILDINGS AND TREES. About 1806. From the Oil-Painting in		
the possession of the Author	22	16
VIEW IN BORROWDALE. October 1806. From the Water-Colour Drawing		
at South Kensington	23	20
SUNSET. About 1806. From the Oil-Painting in the possession of the Author .	23	24
A BRIDGE OVER THE MOLE. About 1807. From the Oil-Painting in the		
possession of Alexander Young, Esq	29	28
KESWICK LAKE. Exhibited 1807. From the Oil-Painting in the possession of		
the Author	23	32
SOPHIA LLOYD AND CHILD. About 1807. From the Oil-Painting in the		
possession of Miss Lloyd ,	32	36
DEDHAM VALE. About 1809. From the Oil-Painting in the National Gallery	33	40
ON THE STOUR NEAR DEDHAM. About 1810. From the Oil-Painting at		
South Kensington	23	44
GOLDING CONSTABLE'S HOUSE, EAST BERGHOLT. About 1810.		
From the Oil-Painting in the possession of James Orrock, Esq.	33	48
HEAD OF A GIRL. About 1810, From the Oil-Painting at South Kensington	37	52
CHURCH PORCH, EAST BERGHOLT, SUFFOLK. Exhibited 1811. From		
the Oil-Painting in the Tate Gallery, Millbank	39	56
VIEW ON THE STOUR (FLATFORD MILL). 1811. From the Oil-Painting		
at South Kensington	23	60
LANDSCAPE WITH DOUBLE RAINBOW. July 1812. From the Oil-		
Painting at South Kensington	39	64
	xi	

A STUDY OF FLOWERS. 1814. From the Oil-Painting at South Kensington BOAT-BUILDING NEAR FLATFORD. Exhibited 1815. From the Oil-	Facing page	68
Painting at South Kensington	71	72
Kensington	,,	76
the National Gallery	"	80
South Kensington	2)	84
Painting in the possession of Alexander Young, Esq	>>	88
STRATFORD MILL ON THE RIVER STOUR. Exhibited 1820. From the Oil-Painting in the possession of Sir Samuel Montagu, Bart.	"	92
HARWICH; SEA AND LIGHTHOUSE. Exhibited 1820. From the Oil-Painting in the Tate Gallery, Millbank	"	96
WATER MEADOWS NEAR SALISBURY. About 1820. From the Oil-Painting at South Kensington	,,	100
THE HAYWAIN (SKETCH). Exhibited 1821. From the Oil-Painting at		104
OLD HOUSES AT HARNHAM BRIDGE, SALISBURY. November 1821.		104
From the Water-Colour Drawing at South Kensington . THE SALT-BOX, HAMPSTEAD HEATH. About 1821. From the Oil-	1)	108
Painting in the Tate Gallery, Millbank	**	112
Charles Tennant, Bart	1)	116
1823. From the Oil-Painting at South Kensington	,,	120
South Kensington	,, 1	124
HAMPSTEAD HEATH. About 1823. From the Oil-Painting in the possession of Messrs. Obach and Co	" 1	128
A BOAT PASSING A LOCK. Exhibited 1824. From the Mezzotint by S. W. Reynolds	,, I	32
THE OPENING OF WATERLOO BRIDGE (smaller version). About 1824 From the Oil-Painting at South Kensington	,, I	36
DEDHAM LOCK, OR THE LEAPING HORSE. Exhibited 1825		40
THE CORNFIELD. Exhibited 1826	,, I	44
Gallery	,, [48

GILLINGHAM MILL, DORSETSHIRE. About 1827. From the Oil-Painting		
at South Kensington	Facing pa	ige 152
DEDHAM VALE. Exhibited 1828. From the Mezzotint by David Lucas . A SUMMER AFTERNOON AFTER A SHOWER. About 1828. From the	"	156
Oil-Painting in the National Gallery	>1	160
Kensington	,,	164
Kensington	**	168
in the National Gallery	23	172
From the Mezzotint by David Lucas	93	176
Painting in the National Gallery	79	180
the possession of James Orrock, Esq	93	184
National Gallery	27	188
South Kensington	**	192
National Gallery	22	196
South Kensington	27	204
Gallery	**	212
SMALLER PLATES		
STOKE-BY-NAYLAND. About 1831. From the Oil-Painting in the National	PA	GE
	Title-	-Page
TREES AND COTTAGES. 1810. From the Oil-Painting at South Kensington . A DELL, HELMINGHAM PARK. Exhibited 1830. From the Mezzotint by		5
David Lucas	*	26
A VILLAGE FAIR, 1811. From the Oil-Painting at South Kensington A VIEW ON THE STOUR NEAR DEDHAM. Exhibited 1822. From the Mezz	rotint	27
by David Lucas	otini	4.8
	xiii	45
	AIII	

	PAGE
A CART AND HORSES. 1814. From the Oil-Painting at South Kensington	46
THE STEM OF AN ELM TREE. About 1815. From the Oil-Painting at South	
Kensington,	57
GOLDING CONSTABLE'S HOUSE. About 1809. From the Oil-Painting at South	
Kensington	58
JOHN CONSTABLE. Drawn by himself about 1801. From the original in the National	
Portrait Gallery	74
THE BEACH AT BRIGHTON. 1824. From the Oil-Painting at South Kensington .	75
JOHN CONSTABLE. Painted by C. R. Leslie, R.A. From the Mezzotint by David	
Lucas	91
OLD SARUM. Exhibited 1834. From the Mezzotint by David Lucas	92
JOHN CONSTABLE IN LATER LIFE. Drawn by the author from the original sketch	
in the British Museum	112
LONDON FROM HAMPSTEAD. 1833. From the Water-Colour drawing at South	
Kensington	113
HADLEIGH CASTLE. Exhibited 1829. From the Mezzotint by David Lucas	127
VIGNETTE, HAMPSTEAD HEATH. From the Mezzotint by David Lucas	128
A SHOWER. From an unpublished Mezzotint by David Lucas	139
STUDY FOR 'THE GLEBE FARM.' Exhibited 1827. From the Oil-Painting at South	
Kensington	140
STOKE POGIS CHURCH. 1834. From the Water-Colour drawing at South Kensington	160
THE GLEANERS. About 1824. From the Oil-Painting in the National Gallery	161
WEYMOUTH BAY. About 1819. From the Mezzotint by David Lucas	176
THE MARINE PARADE AND CHAIN PIER, BRIGHTON. Exhibited 1827. From	
the Engraving by Frederick Smith :	177
A DISTANT VIEW OF WOODFORD CHURCH. 1830. From the Water-Colour	
drawing in the possession of Arthur Kay, Esq	204
JAQUES AND THE WOUNDED STAG. Exhibited 1832. From the original Water-	
Colour drawing in the possession of Arthur Kay, Esq	205
ARUNDEL MILL AND CASTLE. Exhibited 1837. From the Mezzotint by David	
Tuesa	

CONSTABLE



INTRODUCTION

HE utter difference between an old picture and a modern one is not due only to the mellowing effect of age. No amount of varnish, and dirt, and decay, and restoration could ever make a Claude Monet look like a Rubens. The difference is more than one of materials or handling, of colour or form, of tone or composition, for it extends

to the choice of subject-matter and also to the feelings with which that matter is viewed. Not only have we ceased to paint like the Old Masters, but we have ceased to think like them.

The change has in some ways been an excellent thing. It has undoubtedly widened the horizon for the landscape painter of the present day. He is no longer bound to one fixed routine of practice, or to a choice between two almost equally fixed classes of subject-matter—the pastorals of Cuyp, or the mythology of Claude and Poussin. He can experiment fearlessly with any pigments or processes he likes to try; he can paint dry or wet, or smoothly or roughly; he can stipple, or slash, or scrape, or smear, or slop, just as he pleases. His extravagances, nay, his absurdities, will be received with respect, perhaps even with enthusiasm, by his artistic colleagues, if only they are daring enough and new enough.

He is equally free to choose and to treat his subject in any way he likes. He can draw upon the whole universe for fact, or can turn for inspiration to the literature of twenty centuries of thought. No limits whatever are imposed upon the use he may make of his taste or his brains. He may be as fantastic as Hokusai or Goya, without exciting a single rival or a single critic to appear

INTRODUCTION

in the law-courts to bear witness against him. In fact, the landscape painter of to-day would seem to be a fortunate man, so long as he can sell his pictures—or has good private means.

Fortunate, in truth, he would be, were he only free from the embarrassment that arises from the multitude and diversity of our contemporary ideals of painting. Fashion in dress is proverbially fickle, but fashion in art-criticism is hardly less coquettish. It is only a few years since Ruskin's dominion in this country was almost universal, or, at least, seemed so firmly established as to render any war of revolt a very long one. The revolt came in due course, and Fashion, without a moment's hesitation, turned her back on the Preraphaelites to kneel before the throne of Velasquez.

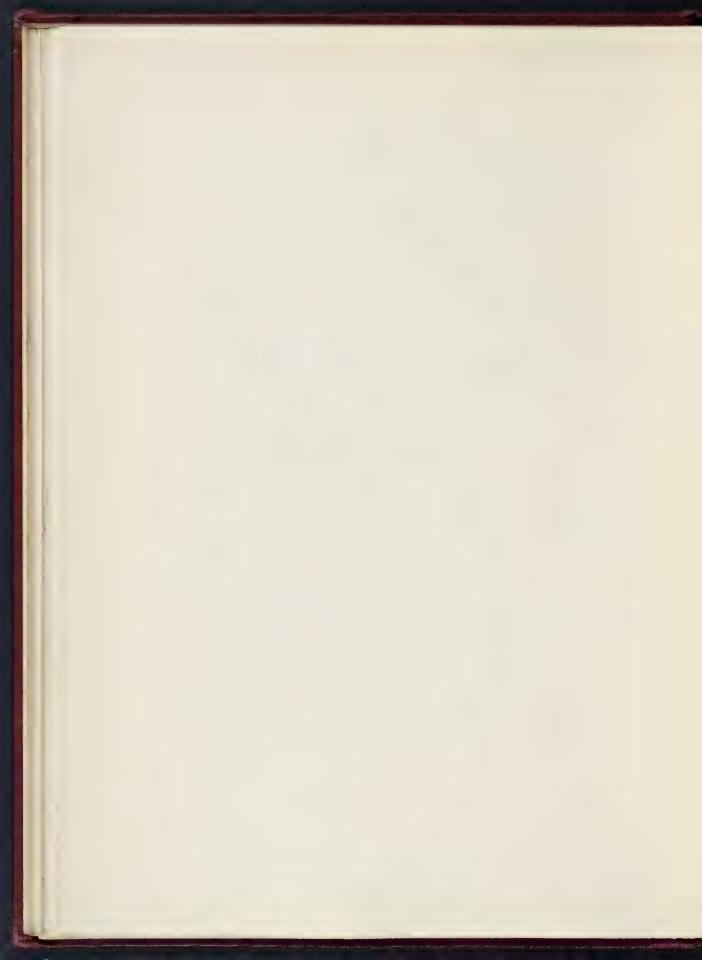
That cult, in its turn, is now hardly recognisable under the mass of additions which have been made to it in the last decade. We have borrowed haphazard from the *Impressionistes* and the *Pointillistes*, the Americans and the Japanese, until our latest manners are too heterogeneous to constitute a fashion, even by using the word in its most generous sense. Here and there one may note an effort at re-starting painting on the lines of the sound and workmanlike tradition of our forefathers. Partly from uncertainty of aim, partly from the fact that the secret of that tradition is practically lost, and has to be rediscovered by each experimenter for himself, this effort has hitherto been successful only in a few instances. Nevertheless, those successes may not unfairly be said to mark the most distinct and definite line of progress among the conflicting forces in the art world of to-day.

If we wish to form a clear estimate of those forces, the present time is not perhaps an unsuitable one. Though opinion as to the methods, and even the aims, of landscape painting is still divided; as far as the practice of the art is concerned we are for the moment living in a period of comparative quiescence. The great movements of the nineteenth century, naturalistic, romantic, preraphaelite, impressionist, Japanese, scientific, symbolic—call them what you will—have all spent their first energy. The freshness of the enthusiasm they once excited has long since faded away. It is now possible for us to

INTRODUCTION

regard them calmly from an outside standpoint, and to appreciate, without more prejudice than is inevitable from the differences in our own natures and education, their several contributions to the fund of artistic experience which has slowly accumulated during the last five centuries.

Among those contributions that of Constable is perhaps the most important, if not in itself, at least in its results. Not only did his example change the whole current of human thought as applied to landscape seventy years ago, but its effects are still with us as very distinct factors in our modern theories of painting. This influence on the art of to-day makes any study of Constable incomplete which does not trace his relation to his successors. If we are also to understand fully the revolution which he effected, some definition of Constable's attitude towards his forerunners, and to the general traditions of landscape, is equally needful.

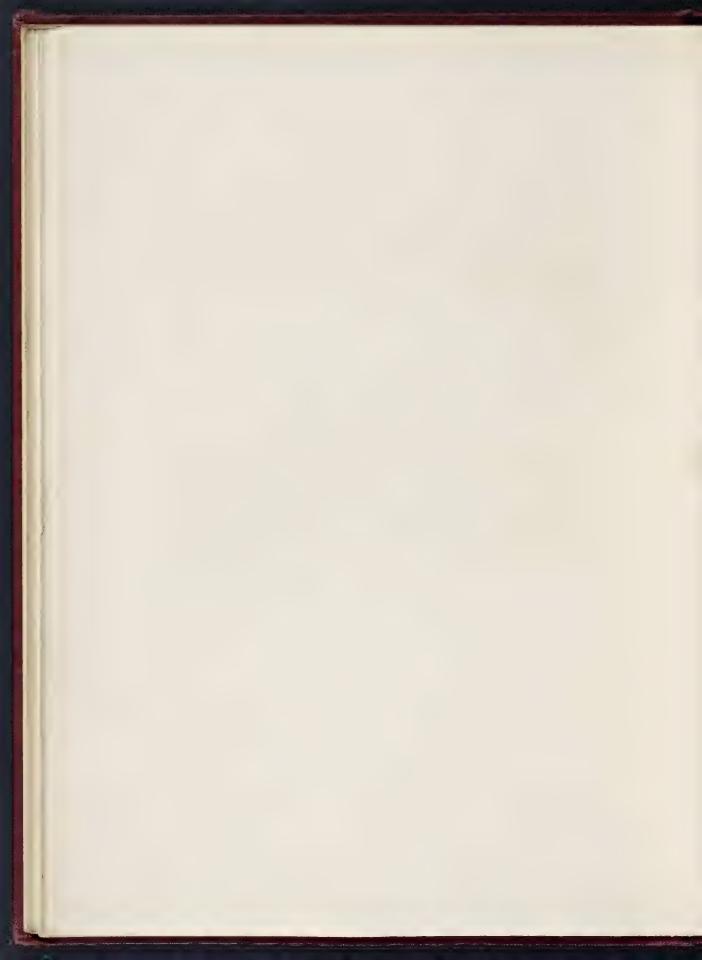


A STUDY OF THE NUDE MALE FIGURE.

About 1800. From the Chalk Drawing at South Kensington.









CHAPTER I

THE TRADITION OF LANDSCAPE

HOUGH every age, and recently every decade, has held a different ideal of Art, a single broad principle seems to underlie and to interpenetrate each of them. One period or School may make sincerity to fact the goal of all effort, another the spread of religion or morality; a third may take pride only in perfection of craftsmanship; a fourth

may see in Painting merely a supremely splendid means of decoration. Great art may combine in varying proportions all such ideals, good art may do no more than attain the single ideal of its own period, but all examples of great or good art agree in this—they aim first of all at the revelation of beauty, and attain their end, whether it be realistic or moral or technical or sensuous, through that revelation only.

For example: the realism of a Velasquez or a Chardin is recognised as great art, not on account of the accuracy and directness with which it seizes upon facts, but on account of the beauty it reveals in the selection and handling of those facts. Where a painter's chief aim has been accuracy

THE TRADITION OF LANDSCAPE

and not beauty, the result, however clever and correct, is merely a parade of dexterity or conscientiousness, and can only interest those who are incapable of admiring any nobler qualities.

Religious painting might be tested by the same touchstone. Fra Angelico, for instance, is a great religious painter, not because he paints religious subjects—hundreds of quite worthless painters have done that; not because he was a good man—hundreds, nay thousands, of good men, with the best intentions in the world, have painted abominably. Fra Angelico is a great painter because his sense of the beautiful in form, in colour, and in design was most highly developed—because before all else he was able to reveal the beauty of holiness.

The definition of beauty as revealed in the Graphic Arts is too complex a problem to be solved here. It will be sufficient for our purpose if we acquiesce in the fairly obvious statement, that The Beautiful is that which is capable of exciting feelings of exhilaration and refinement in the highest intellects through the trained senses.

The intellectual power must be considerable, otherwise it will be unable to follow all the winding paths of thought and emotion along which any great work of art—whether it be a fresco by Michelangelo, a statue of Phidias or of Donatello, a play like the *Agamemnon*, or a symphony of Beethoven—is designed to guide us. It is equally necessary that the senses should be trained, or we shall be deaf to a large part of the message which a work of art has for us.

In the case of Painting, this latter fact cannot be insisted on too strongly, because it is want of training that keeps wide open the everlasting gulf which must inevitably separate the public from the professional painter. If a man cannot understand Shakespeare, he does not usually say it is Shakespeare's fault; yet he is quite ready, offhand, to point out faults in the drawing of Rembrandt or Michelangelo. Forgetting the long, laborious schooldays which built up such literary judgment as he may possess, forgetting the hours of piano-playing or concert-going which have taught him to distinguish Mozart

THE TRADITION OF LANDSCAPE

from Tchaikowsky, he imagines that the power of justly criticising Painting can be gained from a few experiments with water-colours or a few casual visits to exhibitions, strengthened, of course, by that unapproachable bulwark, his natural taste.

Now to appreciate fine colour or fine drawing, the eye requires practice and education, just as does the ear to understand noble music, or the mind to comprehend a great thought. A full comprehension of technical excellence one can hardly expect from those who have not devoted years of study to the practice and theory of Painting. The really deplorable fact is that even the educated public, which affects, and often feels, a real interest in the Fine Arts, has not, as a rule, ever taken the trouble to learn the simplest principles of those arts, or to understand thoroughly even the primary and obvious merits of a single great master. Unassisted by titles and pedigrees, how few can distinguish between the genuine work of an immortal artist and the most empty and incapable copy of it!

Art, as we have seen, reveals beauty by evoking feelings of exhilaration and refinement in the intellect through the trained senses. These feelings are excited in two ways: partly by the subject-matter, partly by the manner in which the subject is handled. In the most perfect works of art, these two sources of excitement are so intimately mingled, that it is almost impossible to consider the one apart from the other.

In Painting this fusion is not always effected even by the greatest masters, but in the fortunate instances where the amalgamation has been achieved, the work of art becomes a final statement of the matter in hand, so that it is impossible to imagine the subject treated in any other way. Of such success the famous 'Fête Champêtre' of Giorgione, or, in the region of pure landscape, Rembrandt's 'Mill' (the picture belonging to Lord Lansdowne), may serve as examples.

Some explanation of this kind is necessary, because many writers on Art have dealt with Painting as if it were a question of two distinct elements—subject-matter and technical treatment—laying little or no stress on the fact

THE TRADITION OF LANDSCAPE

that true pictorial quality depends on neither element alone, but only on their intimate combination. The whole question was summed up most admirably by Walter Pater in his essay on 'The School of Giorgione'—perhaps the soundest piece of æsthetic criticism in our language. 'All art,' he writes, 'constantly aspires towards the condition of music,' and he justifies his claim that music 'is the true type or measure of perfected art' by pointing out that 'in its ideal, consummate moments the end is not distinct from the means, the form from the matter, the subject from the expression; they inhere in and completely saturate each other, and to it, therefore, to the condition of its perfect moments, all the arts may be supposed constantly to tend and aspire.'

The history of the fusion of these two elements, the form and the matter, in Painting would be the true history of its tradition. That fusion, however, is in its very nature so impalpable, so indefinite, and so evasive, while the conditions under which it has been effected have varied so constantly with the needs and the fashions of different races and successive ages, that any attempt to trace its course precisely is almost, if not quite, impossible. It is simpler to consider form and matter separately, and then to use the results of our inquiries as principles by which any individual cases can be judged.

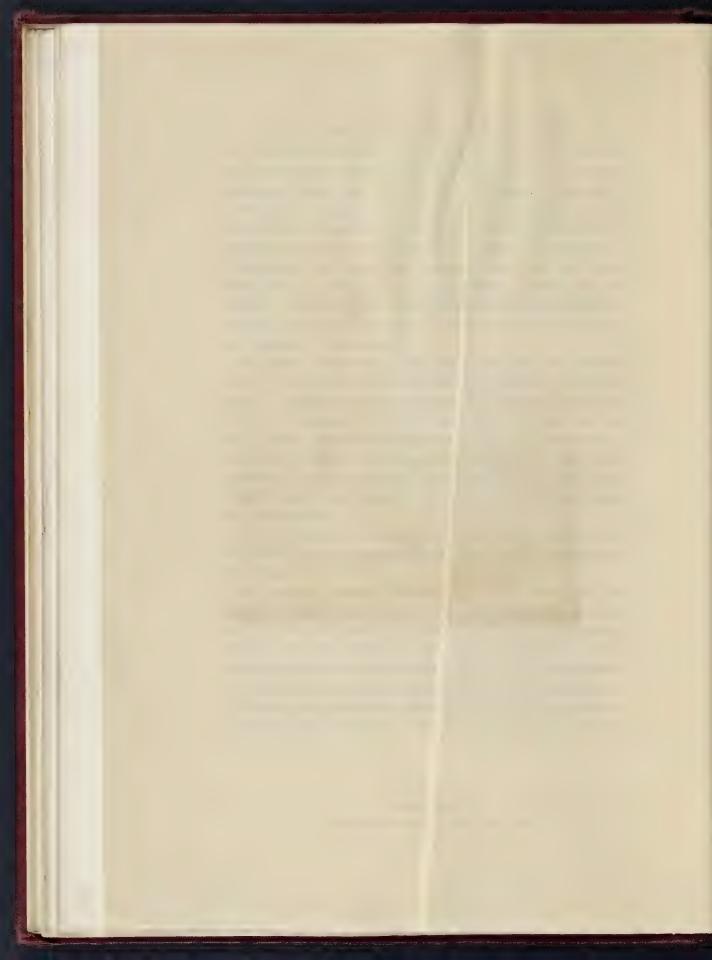
For our present purpose it will be more convenient to deal first with form—that is to say, the manner and the processes by which an idea is made into a picture.

In this respect Landscape stands on practically the same footing as Historical, Portrait, or Genre painting. All require similar pigments to be spread upon similar grounds with similar tools and on similar technical principles. The whole difference between them lies in the nature of the subject-matter with which they are severally concerned. The mechanical means which they all employ to express that subject-matter are essentially identical.

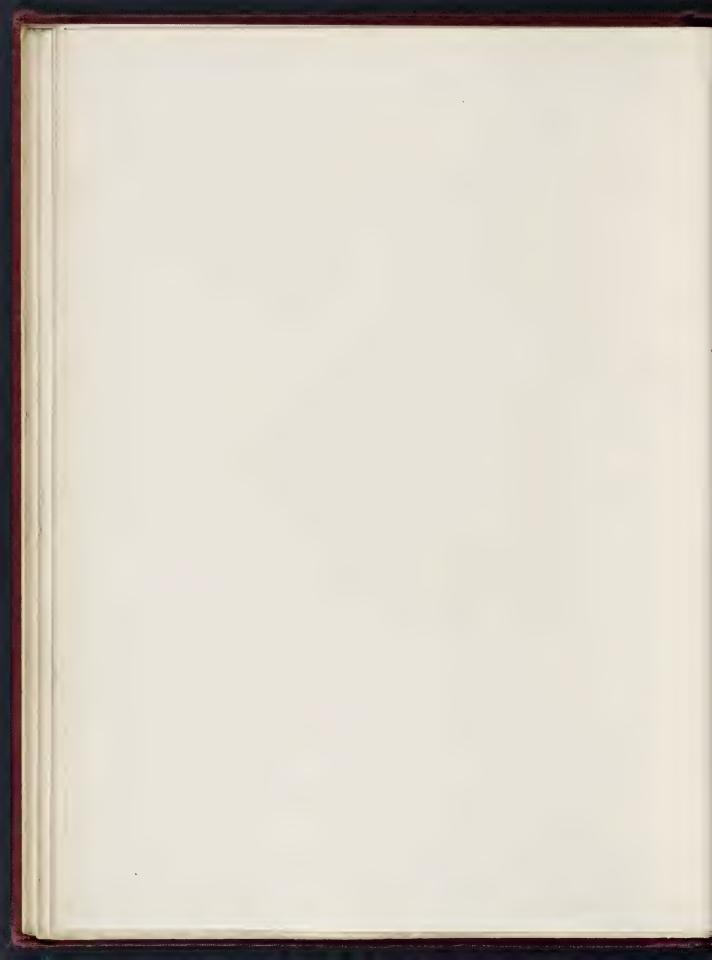
Though, in the past, encaustic painting, mosaic, fresco painting, tempera painting, and other processes have been used, often extensively, for the

DEDHAM VALE.

Septem .r 1802. From the 1-1 the at South Kensington.







expression of artistic ideas, and though, during the nineteenth century, water-colour has been in common use throughout Europe (in the East it has been the general medium for a thousand years), nearly all the important work of the last four centuries in the Western Hemisphere has been executed in pigments that were mixed with a siccative oil, and spread upon the surface of a panel or a stretched canvas.

The method has good reasons for its popularity. It requires no elaborate paraphernalia, and so can be as readily used for rapidly noting some momentary artistic impulse, as for working out an elaborately planned scheme. It is practically permanent under ordinary conditions, although, in common with all other known pictorial processes, it may not be able to stand gross carelessness or ill treatment. Its greatest advantage, however, is its flexibility. When once the manipulation is thoroughly mastered, oil-painting becomes almost anything that a painter chooses to make it. The vigour and fluency of Rubens or Reynolds, the lightness and delicacy of Watteau or Gainsborough, the brilliant ease of Velasquez or Van Dyck, the intensity of Rembrandt or Millet, the jewel-like detail of Van Eyck or Memling, the subtle vibration of Titian's colour, not to mention the results obtained by more modern experiments, indicate how wide a range of technical qualities is opened up to the artist by the process of painting in oil.

The capacities of the medium were only discovered gradually. The method perfected by the brothers Van Eyck in the Netherlands was hardly so much oil-painting as varnish-painting. As the details of that method are now lost, we can with certainty say little more of it than that the colours appear to have been largely diluted with a transparent oil-varnish, which must have been very thin and liquid, for the tints were spread almost in the manner of water-colour upon a white ground which shone through them, and gave them their peculiar brilliancy. Even in the painting of flesh, the early Flemish painters were exceedingly desirous of retaining this luminosity. When compelled to use opaque pigment, they use it so scrupulously and so lightly, that the result, if not actually transparent, is at least translucent.

The exact history of the introduction of this method into Italy is still uncertain, but there can be little doubt that, from an early period, a glaze of oil-varnish was used to finish paintings executed in tempera. As time went on, experience and experiment proved that this glazing, if used as a painting process, as soon as the main masses of the work had been laid in in tempera, was capable of producing a richness of tone and a depth of colour which could not be attained by tempera alone. Thus at the end of the fifteenth century tempera was used only for the initial stages of a picture, the modelling and finishing being done in oil-paint.

This change of technique marks the end of an epoch in the history of Landscape. Till that change took place, the art had been strictly limited to a given scale of tones and effects. Both in Northern and Southern Europe painting started as an ornament, an appendage, of ecclesiastical architecture, and for the first two centuries of its existence continued to be dominated by the conditions which had brought it into being.

The aim of this early art was twofold. Like the churches which it embellished, it was to serve as a memorial of the piety and munificence of its donors. It was also to be a visible and comprehensible sign of the beauty, the dignity, and the pathos of the Christian faith.

Cennino Cennini's treatise shows that the painters themselves did not look on their craft merely as a convenient way of making a living. 'I give you this advice,' says he, 'that you endeavour to adorn always with fine gold and good colours, particularly in the figures of Our Lady. And if you say that a poor person cannot afford the expense, I answer that, if you work well and give time to your work and good colours, you will acquire so much fame that a rich person will come to you to pay for the poor one . . . and, whenever you should not be well paid, God and Our Lady will reward your soul and body for it.'

It is not wonderful that, under such circumstances, painting should have been made as attractive to the eye as was possible by a liberal use of bright colours and gilding. The painter's attention, too, had to be directed almost

entirely to the precise definition of the attributes and gestures of the saintly personages depicted, so that there might be no doubt as to their identity in the mind of the simplest and most uneducated worshipper.

It was not until the revival of the arts had progressed so far that painters were no longer content to set their figures against a background of gilding or flat colour, that the effort to realise their subjects still more perfectly led them to try to represent people in their natural surroundings, and thus, almost accidentally, to bring Landscape into existence. Being still, however, only an accompaniment to the main matter of the picture, the landscape element was treated with exactly the same brightness, definiteness, and serenity as the rest. These qualities, indeed, were native to the technical methods of using tempera and oil-varnish vehicles as then understood, which made any broader or more summary style of handling quite impossible.

To this restriction we owe some of the most perfect passages of landscape in existence. The gemlike distances of Van Eyck and Memling, and the wider horizons of the early Italian masters, are things to which the memory can return again and again without risk of satiety. The recollection of those fresh woods and windless waters, those blue hills and expanses of tranquil sky, seem to transport the soul to some country of eternal spring to which the stress and agitation of our life here can never penetrate. The appeal of these primitive masters is certainly limited—in a picture-gallery it may even seem monotonous—but of its power, of its sympathy with our most intimate spiritual needs, there can be no doubt. Landscape since the fifteenth century has made vast advances in range and in complexity, but the serene brightness of its first coming is still undimmed and unequalled.

A good deal has been written, at one time or another, about the naturalistic aim of the early masters. Nevertheless, it cannot be seriously maintained that their work is realistic in the modern sense of the word. Little or no attempt is made at the actual imitation of natural forms and tones. All that the primitive artist really wished to do in his versions of landscape was to make them a fitting environment for his figures, that is to

say, spaces of clear, fresh colour, delicate detail, and exquisite purity of aerial effect.

The colours and tones are perfect in their way, but have only a vague, general relation to the colours and tones of our own earth; indeed, to that very dissimilarity they owe their peculiar unearthly charm. The detail is often exquisitely minute, but its minuteness is not the infinitely varied minuteness of nature. The architecture, the trees, and the rocks of the primitive masters are little more than clearly drawn symbols of the real things, relics often of the still older conventions of missal-painting, varied at the painter's fancy, but varied always within the limit of those conventions.

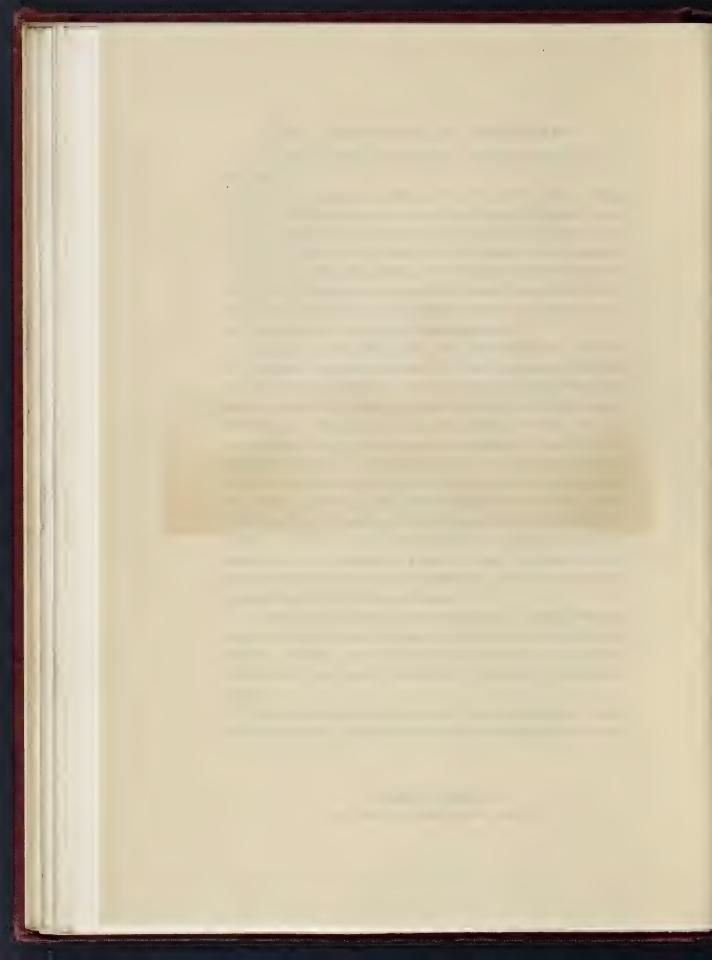
In the case of a draughtsman like the young Raphael, these variations may undoubtedly be extremely beautiful. No words can express the virginal grace of Raphael's slender trees, with their delicate lacework of twigs and leaves and shoots; but the twigs and leaves and shoots are more like lacework than like nature. Only when we come to the painting of the clear, open sky do we find these early masters to be truly naturalistic. Even here their naturalism would seem to be rather the result of a conservative habit of mind, which was content to do no more than modify the flat backgrounds of a previous age, than of any original observation. At any rate, as soon as they try to paint clouds the result is almost always conventional and ineffective. In fact, the aim of the early masters in their landscape backgrounds was not the imitation of nature, but rather the suggestion of an unearthly prospect, in whose brightness, definiteness, and serenity their saintly personages would have a fitting environment.

In Dürer and Leonardo we begin to see signs of a change of attitude. Both are enormously interested in natural detail—in the structure of flowers and trees and men,—yet in both this curiosity is overwhelmed by more personal artistic preoccupations, which make their references to nature quite arbitrary.

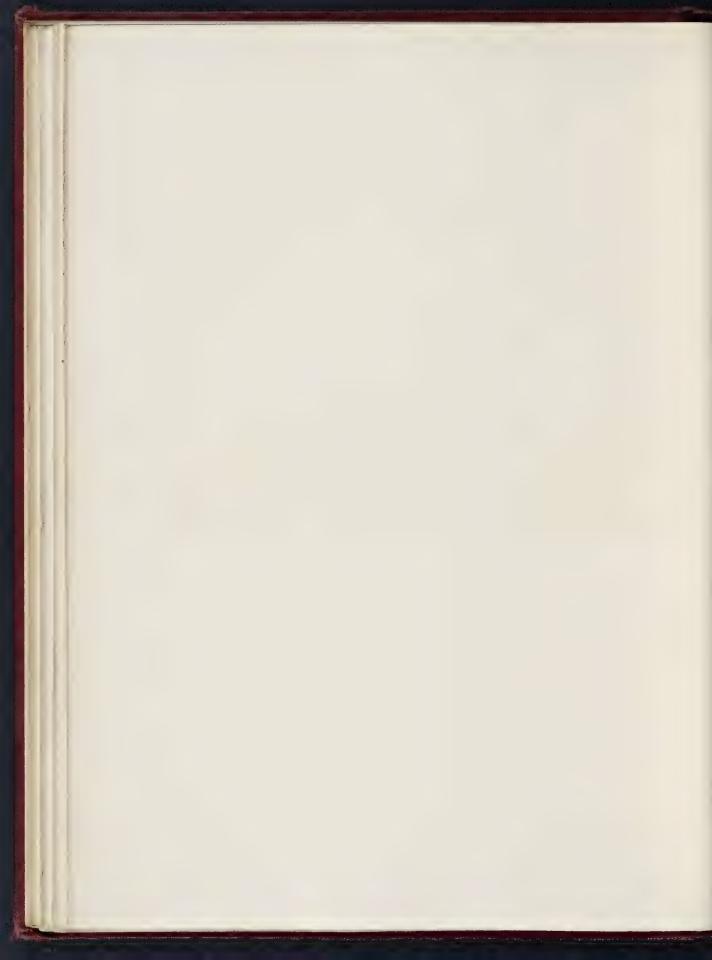
The amazing patience and accuracy of Dürer's drawing cause him at times to seem almost a realist, but his exquisite foreground detail and the

ON BARNES COMMON.

About 1805. From the Oil-Painting in the National Gallery.







castled crags, which are the most prominent feature of his distances, are done more from sheer delight in intricate craftsmanship than from any idea of actually imitating nature. Some of his studies, the background to his portrait in the Uffizi, his etching of a cannon, and one or two other engravings, show that, under different circumstances, he might have become a very great landscape painter. He was too imaginative, too fond of drawing for its own sake, ever to have remained a mere imitator. Whatever his love of natural fact, he would always have kept it strictly subordinate to artistic effect.

Still more was this the case with Leonardo. Both in his innumerable sketches, and in the two or three pictures which modern criticism has allowed to him, there occur studies of flowers and plants more delicate even than those of Dürer. There is evidence, too, that he looked at nature with an independent eye, and noted many particular and peculiar effects of chiaroscuro, of perspective, and of the movement of waves and storm-clouds, which till his time had been unregarded. Yet in his landscape he passes always to a dim world of his own, as lonely and remote from ours as the surface of some dying planet, in which a waste of fantastic rocks and formless sheets of water stretches away under an eternal twilight.

With Leonardo, in fact, the definiteness and brightness which had characterised the work of his predecessors pass out of painting for ever. That restless experimentalist, always on the search for the philosopher's stone which would transmute the materials of his art, was one of the first to realise fully the limitations of the ancient method—its meagreness, its hardness—compared with the vibration and mystery of the real things it was expected to render. Unassisted and unmodified, neither the direct varnish-painting of the North, nor the hatched tempera of the South, were capable of reproducing for him the softness and translucency of human flesh, much less those infinite gradations of shifting shadow over the features on which depend the expression of all but the most obvious phases of human emotion.

Thus, in the hands of Leonardo, after he left Florence, the glaze, which

in the earlier tempera work had been merely the addition of a pleasant surface to an already completed painting, becomes itself an integral part of the painting process, and not its least important part. When the general design had been clearly laid in with tempera, the final painting was begun with an oil glaze, frequently rubbed and smoothed and patted with the finger-tips (the marks can still be seen) to catch the suppleness and the tenderness of surfaces which were not mere dead matter. The result of such a method is not definition but suggestiveness, not brightness but mystery, not the rigid immobility of a statue but the tremulous pulsation of life. Modern criticism, which has done so much to clear up Leonardo's history, has perhaps gone too far in one or two cases, where it has condemned magnificent works long ascribed to him, by applying to them not only the standard of subtlety which we all admire in 'La Gioconda,' but also the very standard of sculpturesque definition which he was the first to supersede.

I have mentioned Leonardo specially, because, with Correggio and Titian, he was responsible for the great change in technique which led to the establishment of oil-painting as an art complete in itself with a definite tradition of practice. Correggio's actual achievement in landscape painting, though it is adorned with his usual charm of colour, is too slight and casual to call for any extended notice. The rise of Landscape as a distinct branch of art must be put to the credit of the Venetians.

Art in Venice had, from the first, been consecrated not so much to religion, as with religion to the service of the State. The conditions of life in the Venetian Republic give its painting an entirely different character from that of the art centres of Central Italy or Northern Europe, where the chief interest of the cultured classes was scientific or religious. Venice went on her way undisturbed by any such intellectual struggles, whose bearing on life seemed remote compared with the pleasure of life itself in a place which nature and fortune seemed to combine to glorify. Under such circumstances it is not hard to comprehend why the arts should have developed in Venice almost as freely and spontaneously as they did in ancient Greece.

In Venice there were no influences at work which could divert them from their true purpose, the revelation of beauty. They were modified only by the necessity of putting on a certain air of pomp and splendour befitting the rich city which had given them birth, and the proud government which fostered them.

Venetian painting was thus developed rather with the purpose of catching and impressing the eye of the public than as a matter of personal research or personal devotion. The tendencies, therefore, which had led artists in other places to make pictures outwardly attractive were particularly accentuated in Venice, so that it is not strange to find the tempera painting, which elsewhere, in spite of the example of Giotto and Angelico, of Filippo Lippi, and Botticelli, and Piero della Francesca, had retained a general tone of coolness, of austerity almost, assume with the first masters of the Venetian School a more generous warmth and luxury. The great Titian himself hardly seems to arrive as an accident, but rather as the natural culmination of the labours of Carpaccio, Bellini, and Giorgione.

Fortunate above the ordinary measure of genius in the completeness of his gifts and the even balance of his intellect, Titian was still more fortunate in the moment of his birth. Coming into the world at the moment when the new method of oil-painting was just about to be used experimentally by Giovanni Bellini; thrown into contact in early youth with the amazing personality of Giorgione, so instinct with the passion for more fancy, more liberty in the still rigid and static art of the time, he outlives them both by sixty years, full of honour, pleasure, and employment, at the very time when Italian art came to perfect maturity.

What is the essence of Titian's contribution to the technical part of painting? His predecessors had gained their effects at first by working in tempera entirely, adding perhaps a coat of varnish at the last to protect the surface. Later a few thin glazes of oil-varnish colour were used in the finishing process. Later still came a fairly elaborate system of transparent painting in oil, or a tempera foundation, which shone through the colour

and gave it that luminous quality which is seen to perfection in the later work of Giovanni Bellini.

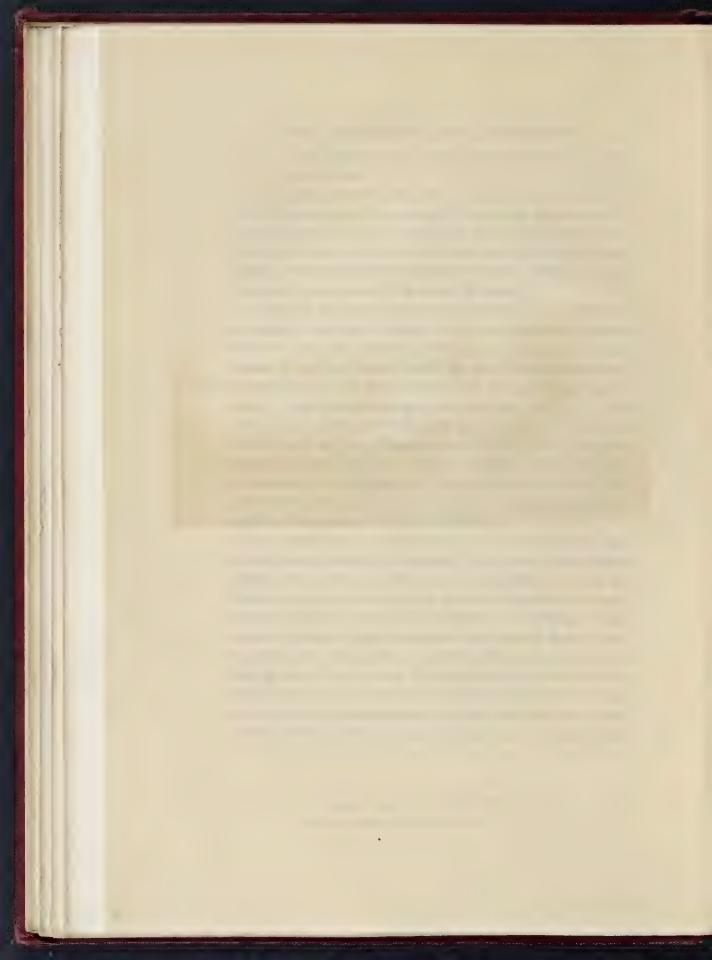
Titian at first followed in the steps of his master, but his connection with Giorgione seems to have opened his eyes to the limitations of the traditional method, and his mature practice was something very different. The accounts of their practice which have been handed down to us vary considerably, so that even after close study of his work it is difficult to do more than obtain a general notion of the method he followed.

He retained the tempera ground of his predecessors, and on it worked out his subject in monochrome. Judging from the 'Noli Me Tangere' (National Gallery, No. 270), this monochrome would appear to have been a thinnish painting in raw umber, though tradition speaks of a more solid foundation in white, black, red, and yellow. This first painting was then put aside for a time. When it was thoroughly dry, the local colours seem to have been laid in upon it broadly and frankly, with but little regard for delicacy or gradation, as in the 'Holy Family' (National Gallery, No. 4). The main masses of the work being thus definitely mapped out, the whole was toned and modelled by an elaborate series of rubbings of opaque colour, and glazes of transparent colour, with sharp passages of light and dark here and there to give the proper amount of contrast and relief.

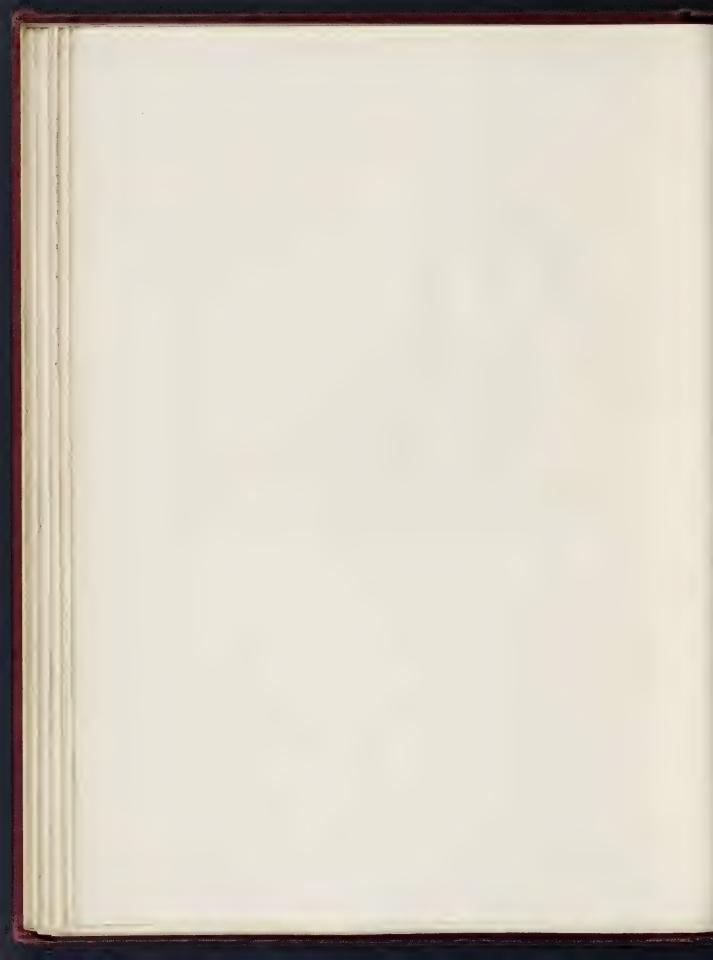
This lengthy process enabled Titian to unite in his best works almost all the qualities attainable in oil-painting. The variety of the methods employed gives a variety of surface which is more pleasing to the eye and far more suggestive of nature than the monotonous appearance of paintings produced by any more direct and simple process. The monochrome foundation and the free use of glazes insured unity of tone, while in respect of colour the process was equally kindly. It afforded endless opportunities for the breaking down of positive colour, for contrasting opaque colour with colour got by glazing, and for obtaining that vibrancy of each particular tone which can be got only by the interpenetration of one hue with another, and on which all noble colouring depends. Lastly, the melting surface resulting from such

FARM BUILDINGS AND TREES.

About 1806. From the Oil-Painting in the possession of the Author.







laborious manipulation was the best possible ground and foil for those brilliant passages—the crisp flash of white linen, the sharp stroke with which a master here and there defines an edge, or the vigorous impasto by which he emphasises some piece of decisive brushwork—which inspire the hitherto inert mass of pigment with the fire of life. In detail qualities of this kind appeal perhaps chiefly to professional painters; but even the untrained eye can recognise the dulness which results from their absence.

Titian as he grew older, possibly from a dislike of the lengthy processes involved, possibly from the vast number of commissions he received, possibly from increasing confidence in his own powers, modified and simplified the method considerably. In his later manner the underpainting becomes more and more important, till at last the whole picture is almost finished in solid black and white, and the colour is added with a few broad glazes and scumbles. The 'Andromeda' at Hertford House will serve as an example of this practice, as its colour is unusually well preserved. The tendency of a dark under-painting to become more prominent in course of time makes it difficult to guess what the precise effect of Titian's later pictures could have been when first painted. In their present state they are undoubtedly inferior in every way to the work of his youth and early manhood.

Of the matter and spirit of Titian's landscape I propose to speak elsewhere. It will be sufficient here to point out the innovations in it which were the direct result of the technical changes that he introduced. With Titian landscape for the first time may be considered as a distinct branch of art, although the picture at Buckingham Palace, the one example of pure landscape attributed to him, does not seem to come entirely from his hand. His method was especially favourable for representing the fusion of large masses of soft colour, and for the introduction here and there of sharp passages of detail to give relief. His landscapes thus are composed of a warm foreground fading into a broad mass of blue distance, with a wide expanse of sky overhead, relieved perhaps by the flash of a fold of luminous cloud, and made aerial by contrast with some spray of glowing foliage that swings across it.

17

This formula, which Titian was wise enough to reanimate constantly by incessant reference to nature, Tintoret transformed into a convention, which, with all its inventive energy, has too often a way of looking theatrical. In the hands of Titian's other contemporaries and followers his late manner was systematised till it became almost a trade recipe, and as such passed first to the studios of the Bolognese eclectics, and then to the decaying Schools of Central and Southern Italy.

From the work done by those Schools the student of landscape technique has little or nothing to learn which cannot be learned better elsewhere. The living tradition of the art did not remain with them, but was continued by Claude, the Poussins, and Salvator in the South, and passed to Northern Europe with Rubens.

The technical peculiarities of Gaspar Poussin and Salvator need not detain us long. Their manner is based on that of Titian's old age; that is to say, they started their work in monochrome, which they carried as far as possible before putting in the local colours by a combination of glazing and scumbling. Finding that the greens and greys of nature looked cold when translated into paint, they tried to insure warmth by the use of a strong red ground. Their pictures have thus a certain air of heaviness, which is not relieved as a rule by any remarkable delicacy of handling. Nevertheless, in their distances they often obtain fine tones of cool turquoise blue, and their best works leave an impression of considerable force and dignity.

Claude painted in a similar way, but with a gentler hand. He was thus able to utilise to some extent the opportunities afforded by Titian's method for rendering the quiet sunshine which he was the first to interpret in paint. The breadth, atmosphere, and luminosity of his distances and open skies are obtained by an elaborate series of glazes and scumbles which interpret nature the more perfectly because they are analogous to her own method of half concealing, half revealing things seen far away through the translucent veil of the air. Claude's weakness is due not

so much to the amateurishness of his figure drawing, or the limitations of his artistic imagination, as to a certain inborn timidity of temperament. This makes him afraid of those sharp contrasts of colour or tone by which greater men have delighted to enliven their work. Claude's sketches show clearly enough that he could see contrasts in nature, but he seems to have feared to employ them in oil-painting. Nevertheless he is perhaps the only landscape painter of Southern Europe who can be said to have used Titian's discoveries rightly, by grafting on to them a great and genuine discovery of his own—the painting of sunshine.

In saying this I have not forgotten Canaletto and Guardi, whose best pictures combine good design, clever brushwork, and charming colour. These brilliant Venetians, however, did not attempt to face new difficulties. The best that can be said of them is that they treated their formal and limited subject-matter with much skill and taste, and that they never forgot the excellent technical tradition of their native place, so that the expression of their ideas came to them easily. Canaletto and Guardi are in fact delightful essayists rather than creative artists.

Except in England, where it was responsible for much of the cool, tranquil beauty of Wilson's twilight, and for some of the splendour of Turner's sunshine, the example of Claude was of little or no benefit to his successors. They seem to have imitated all that was formal, timid, and artificial in his work without ever catching the secret of his charm. It is to the modifications introduced by Rubens into Titian's practice that subsequent landscape art owes the best part of its character.

Rubens, when he became acquainted with the work of Titian, was already a trained artist, trained, that is to say, in the northern method of transparent painting on a luminous ground. Deeply impressed though he must have been by the superior breadth, variety, and splendour of the Venetian master, it was impossible for him to forget and to annul the habits of thought and practice which he had already formed. When he imitates Titian he cannot force himself to become for the time wholly

a Venetian, but always remains a Fleming working in the Venetian manner.

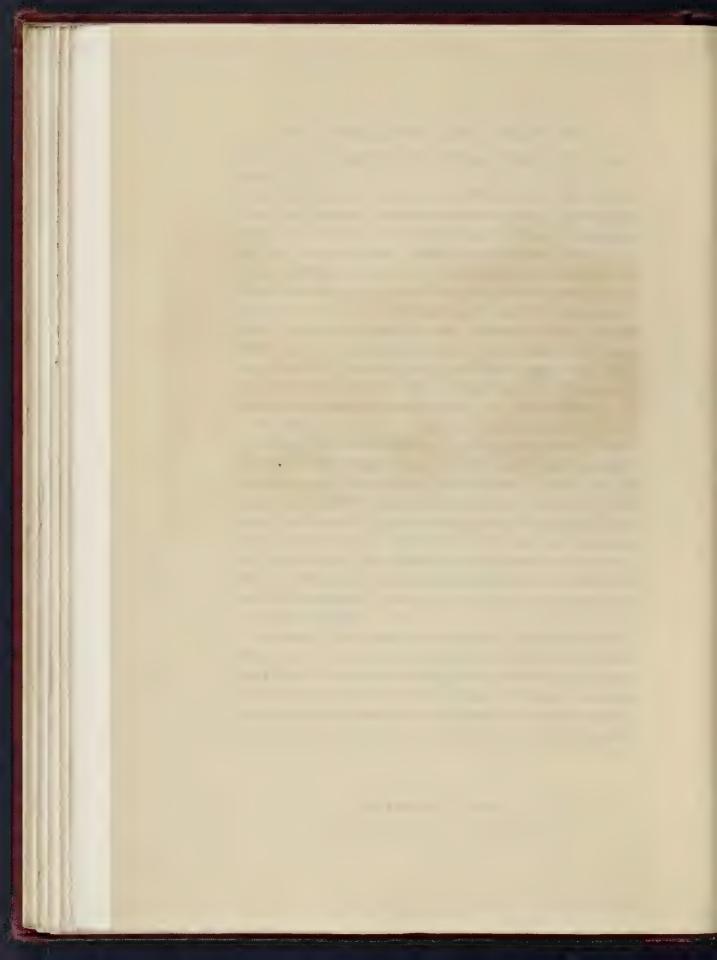
The difference is an important one. The essence of the Flemish method was luminosity, obtained by transparent painting over a light ground. This luminosity, by amazing freedom of expression, lightness of hand, and certainty of stroke, Rubens managed to retain, while he succeeded in adding to it much of the variety of surface, of quality and of texture which he found in Titian by a masterly use of glazing and scumbling. The result of this combination, considered merely as professional painting, is perhaps the most consistently brilliant that has hitherto been achieved in the history of the world. Rubens reaches time after time a pitch of technical perfection and outward attractiveness which even Titian compasses but rarely, and which many artists who are deservedly placed among the world's great men have never compassed at all.

The distinctive feature of Rubens's method is, as we have seen, its transparency. Instead of working on the solid, opaque monochrome foundation of the Italians, Rubens swept in his design with liquid transparent brown over a light ground, and into this preparation, sometimes while it was still moist, the local colour was lightly brushed. Emphasis by solid impasto was reduced to a minimum and reserved for the high lights, special care being taken to keep the shadows thin and clear, without the least trace of opacity. The melting of the local colours into the monochrome foundation gave them at once, however bright and distinct they might be in themselves, a certain bond of unity which was strengthened later by generous glazing.

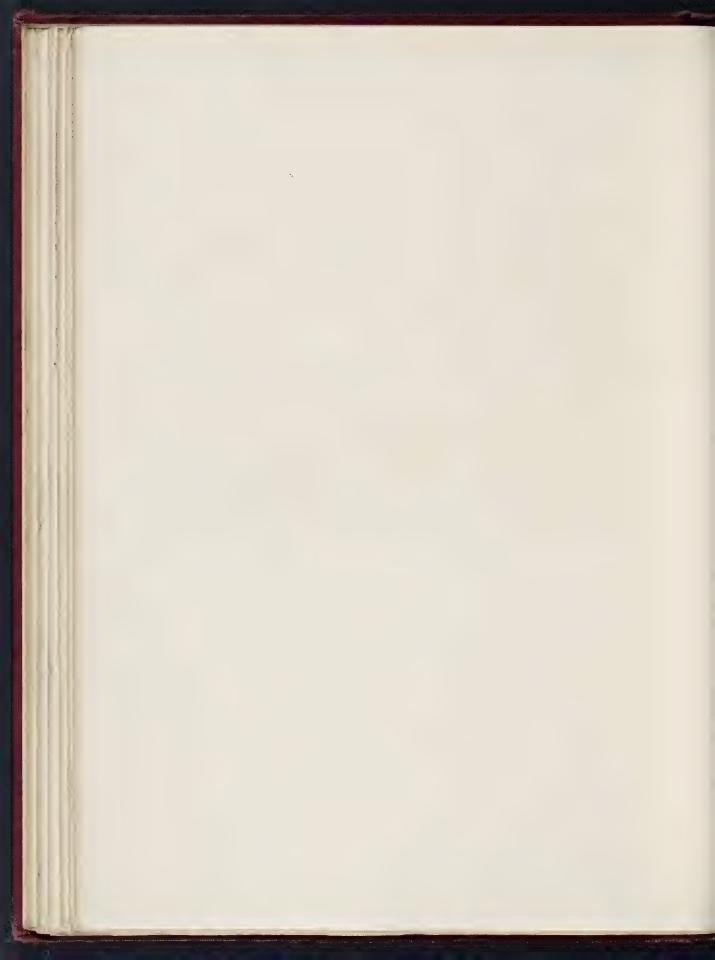
The method was, of course, a very direct one. Each part had to be drawn in once for all, as a subsequent alteration would have led to coldness and heaviness. This necessity of really drawing the forms with the brush, and making the strokes correspond in direction to the shape of the thing they are intended to suggest, has the advantage of giving each successful passage an air of triumphant, easy mastery which is irresistibly attractive.

VIEW IN BORROWDALE.

October 1806. From the Water-Colour Drawing at South Kensington







Unfortunately this very necessity makes the practice possible only for a very accomplished and decided craftsman, so that Van Dyck and Watteau and Gainsborough can alone be said to have taken full advantage of it. Rembrandt developed a method of painting on similar lines, but with less positive colour and with a far more loaded impasto, which in his later work practically extends over the whole picture.

The other landscape painters of Holland were men of less note, whose ambitions did not extend beyond the giving of a fairly natural version of the cold greens and greys of the Dutch plains and the Dutch sky, filled with as much suggestion of detail as their hands could draw. To gain these ends they had to abandon the warm, transparent method of painting, and were compelled to lay in their pictures more solidly, getting their cool colour and details by a process of slow accumulation. Their method, in practice, is thus almost identical with that of the Italians. Nevertheless they retain to the last a certain dexterity in keeping their shadows clear, a certain lightness of touch, and a certain smoothness of surface which always distinguish them from their rivals in the south.

When the influence of Cuyp and Ruysdael and Hobbema passed to England and helped to educate Crome and the youthful Turner, its effects were almost wholly beneficial, and enabled these Englishmen to employ their great natural gifts to the best advantage. The common practice of the Old Masters can in fact be learned from Crome and Turner as soundly as from their forerunners. For supreme variety and subtlety of colour one must still turn to Titian, for supreme intensity to Rembrandt, for supreme brilliancy to Rubens, for supreme delicacy to Watteau, but the essential technical principles which underlie all of them are the essential principles of the art of Crome and Turner also, the art which the example of Constable would seem to have superseded.

From this brief summary of the old tradition of the mechanical part of picture-making, we may now turn to the more complicated question of its subject-matter. The function of all pictures is twofold. They should

be decorative, that is to say, evidently beautiful things, both in themselves and in their adaptation to their surroundings—things where form and colour are as deliberately concentrated, ordered, and refined as in a fine piece of porcelain. They are also to some extent illustrative, because they are always the symbol of some fact or idea, however slight or vague. Picture-making is the combination of such symbols into a decorative scheme.

The pictorial symbol of any natural object is therefore related not only to the object itself, but also to the decorative scheme of which it is a part. The relation to the object itself, however incomplete, must be fairly definite, or the symbol may convey no impression at all to the spectator, or even a wrong impression. The symbol must also preserve its due relation to the decorative scheme of which it forms a part, or that scheme will cease to be decorative. For instance—a tree in a chalk sketch by Gainsborough may not be as like nature as a photograph would be. Yet supposing we could replace the chalk tree by a photograph of a real one of the same size and shape, would the artistic effect of the sketch be improved? Would not the photograph be quite out of key with the rest of the sketch, and appear not as an improvement, but as a blot upon it? Pictorial symbols must, in fact, keep enough resemblance to nature to be easily recognisable, and yet at the same time each must be in absolute harmony with its neighbour.

The aim of all perfect art is to reconcile these two distinct aims, and the peculiar difficulty of doing so in the case of a landscape has made that art, like theology and politics, a favourite parade for the wit of critics. In the painting of still-life or of domestic scenes, tradition has always been on the side of resemblance to nature, because the familiarity of the subject-matter would make any other treatment seem affected or incongruous. In the painting of heroic subjects tradition leans just as definitely towards idealisation—towards the revelation of a beauty which can perhaps be expressed pictorially, but whose archetype exists only in the artist's mind—for an imaginary subject will lose all its charm when expressed in terms that are too matter-of-fact.

The place of landscape lies between these two extremes, and cannot be

determined by any hard-and-fast line. An exact imitation of nature can rarely have that harmonious union of beautiful forms and beautiful colours which characterises all the pictures hitherto universally recognised as great. If we were to aim only at producing beautiful forms and beautiful colours, without any reference to nature, our pictures would be empty and meaningless. They might appeal to the senses just as a fine piece of brocade would do, but would fail to convey any impression to the mind.

In practice all great painters have made a compromise of some sort between realism and artistic effect. Something of nature has to be sacrificed to attain a harmonious combination of beautiful form and beautiful colour. Some charm also of form or colour has to be sacrificed to enable the painter to express a feeling that is based on some natural effect. The greatest artist will be the man who has the noblest ideal, and can best conceal the sacrifices he has made to express it.

What then is the noblest ideal of landscape? The question is not an easy one to answer. Some great figure painters seem to have had so low an idea of the sister art as practically to deny that it was capable of any noble ideal whatever. Landscape might be pretty or clever or brilliant, but by the very limitations of its subject-matter it could hardly be anything more.

Nor can it be argued that any landscape painter has arisen hitherto whose work conveys such a host of impressions of power and beauty as does the figure painting of a Michelangelo, a Titian, or a Rembrandt. No mood of nature can be more than an analogy, a dim reflection, of the passions and emotions which can be signified by the gesture of the human form or the expression of the human face. The human body, too, is more pliable material for the designer than the static masses of earth or trees or buildings or water with which the landscape painter has to build up his compositions. Nature rarely provides schemes of colour which are as variously adaptable to pictorial use, and as splendid when so adapted, as the figure painter can command by the proper employment of richly coloured fabrics.

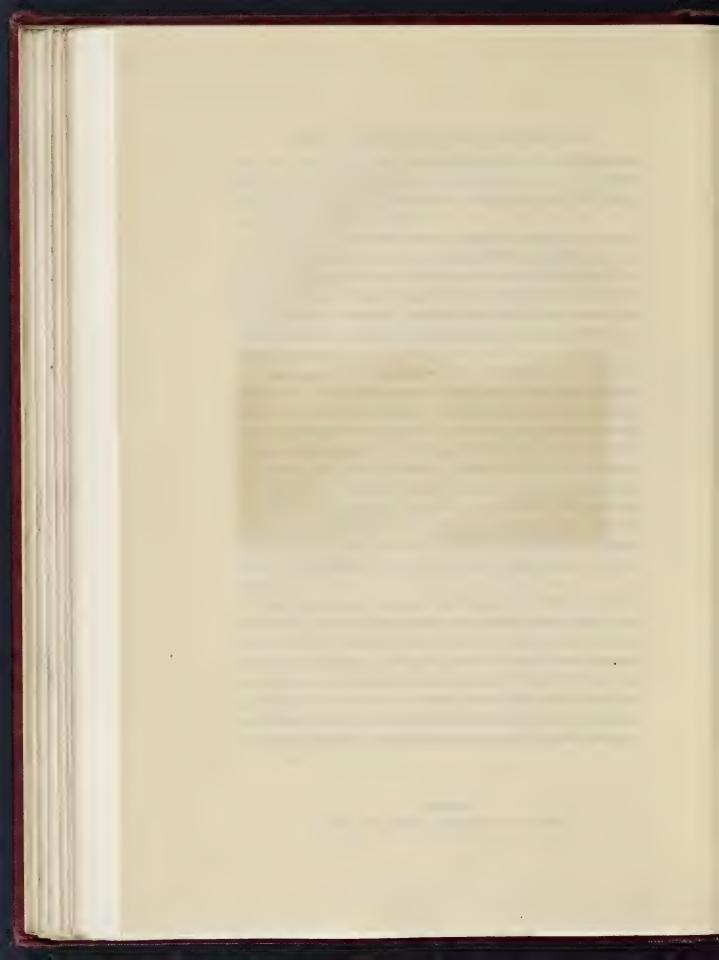
Nor, from the strictly pictorial point of view, can the diffused illumination of the open sky ever really compete in force with the contrasts of brightness and shadow, of definiteness and mystery, which appear when the light is concentrated by a door or a window.

Landscape, then, can never pretend to rival figure painting on the latter's own ground, since it is incapable of the same subtlety of expression, the same flexibility of design, the same brilliant variety of colouring, or the same force of light and shade. Yet if it had not some special charm of its own to counterbalance this inferiority, landscape could hardly have attracted and retained the large, and not peculiarly foolish, body of admirers which it has always possessed.

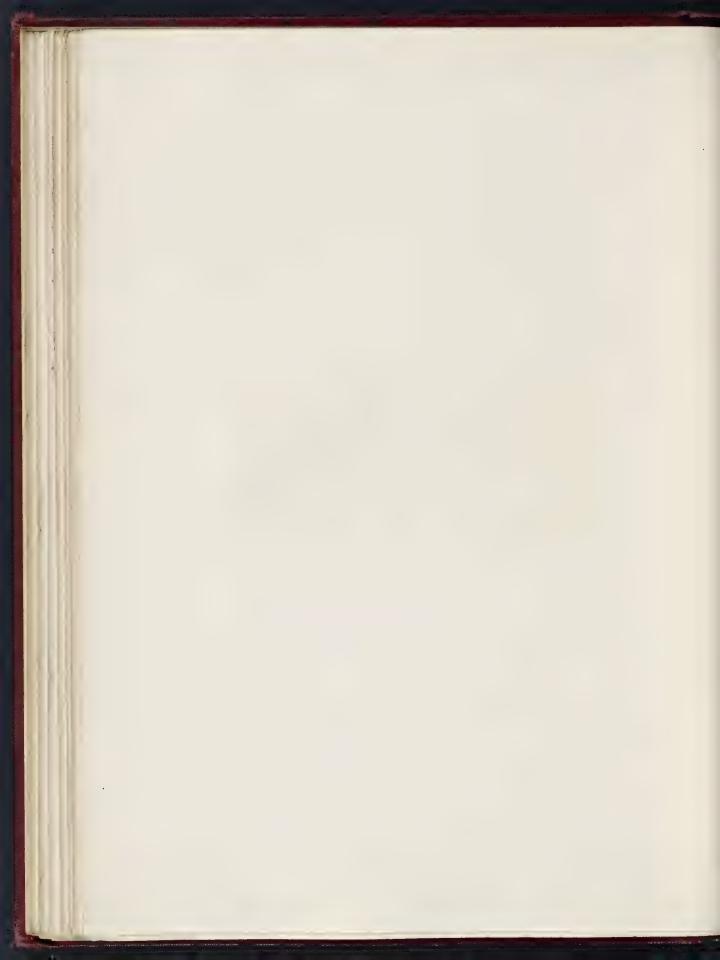
Those qualities of complexity, of variety, of brilliancy, and of contrast, which move us when in the presence of good figure painting, move us because they act as a stimulus to the spirit. They might be compared, not unfairly, to the attractions of life in a great city, where the soul is stirred by constant contact with the subtlest wits, with the prime movers of learning and politics and finance, with men of all nations, all tastes, and all ranks in society. In such a centre of activity, where the great interests and forces of the world are focused, the joy of living may be experienced in its most concentrated form by those who can appreciate the advantages of their position. By the example or the rivalry of kindred spirits a man's intellect is sharpened and his energy redoubled. He deliberately works at high pressure and enjoys doing so.

We may carry the analogy a little further. Existence in such an environment may be the most intense of all possible pleasures, but the pace of it is too quick to last—the strain on the vital forces is more than a man can stand continuously. The activity which at first was keen enjoyment soon turns to mere routine, then to weariness, and at last to loathing. Rest and change of scene become a necessity, and the busy man flies for refuge to the fields, the rivers, the moors, the mountains, or the sea. There nothing is complex or agitated; nothing presses importunately on the tired sensations.









THE TRADITION OF LANDSCAPE

All is simple, restful, and spacious, so that the weary spirit can at last be alone, untroubled and free.

As the keen stimulus derived from good figure painting may be compared to the excitement of an active intellectual life, so the effect of land-scape upon us may be compared to that of a country holiday. The periods in which contemplation takes the place of action may not, from a material point of view, have been the most important in our lives; they may have included no serious crisis of our fortunes, they may recall no decisive triumphs. Nevertheless, in after years it is to these times of repose that our minds revert most pleasurably and most definitely. The details of our troubles and our strivings are apt to become vague memories, until it seems as if the whole of our active existence had been one long uneasy dream, and our holidays the only moments in which we were awake to the reality of life.

Landscape, then, might be described as the pictorial interpretation of man's communion with nature, and its functions are, in their degree, analogous to those of that communion. The mission of landscape is thus to soothe the spirit rather than to excite it, to open out a prospect of quiet, of solitude, or of space. It can stimulate, too, but it stimulates by the indirect process of nature herself-by a gradual attraction rather than by any sudden shock or striking exhibition of force. It can exhilarate by movement, though the movement will not be the strong sweep of the passions, or the agitation of a troubled spirit, but the tonic ebb and flow of the fresh air of heaven. Landscape can also accomplish that purging of the emotions by pity and fear, which for more than two thousand years has been recognised as the function of all tragic art, though it does not do so by the heroic strife or godlike rest of those magnified images of our own humanity which have been the recognised puppets of all the great figure painters, great sculptors, and great poets. The tragic power of landscape lies in its command of the irresistible forces of nature—the storm, the cataract, or the angry sea-and those hardly less tremendous emblems of her repose, the mountains and the twilight.

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THE TRADITION OF LANDSCAPE

The expression of these sensations in art has been so complicated a process that it will be necessary to consider it in detail. Otherwise we shall fail to understand clearly how those tendencies came into being which are characteristic of the landscape painting of the nineteenth century. The brief summary already given of the development of the technical processes employed in landscape makes it needless to refer to that aspect of the art again, at least for the present. What we have to do is to try to trace as definitely as possible the evolution of the modern point of view which Constable was the first to suggest consistently.





CHAPTER II

THE PREDECESSORS OF CONSTABLE

PE have already discussed in some detail the spirit of the primitive masters of landscape. We have noted how with them landscape was never more than an accessory, its subject-matter and treatment alike being practically subordinate to and dependent upon the presentation of the saintly personages for whom it made an environ-

ment. We have seen, too, that its ideal was primarily not realistic, but rather a general suggestion of brightness, definiteness, and serenity. This ideal might include much that was natural, the rendering of real plants, for instance, and sometimes of real places, but the naturalism is always more or less of an accident, the expression of a personal liking for some beautiful object, rather than the result of any deliberate purpose of rendering faithfully some larger combination of natural form and colour and tone. Such art was perfectly adapted for suggesting by analogy the beauty of religion, but was too limited in its scope to do much more. Nor could the more independent, more curious genius of Dürer and Leonardo effect any real change of

attitude. They might study nature more closely and more inquisitively, might draw natural forms as delicately and more grandly, might even observe carefully striking phenomena of perspective, both linear and aërial, of storms and winds and waves, of sunrise and sunset, yet neither of them really cared to look on nature as a whole, and to transfer to canvas any general impression of her shifting play of tones and colours. Like their predecessors, they make a frequent use of perfectly rendered detail, but its employment is quite arbitrary and capricious, and bears little or no reference to the effect of things seen broadly in the open air.

The real change was effected by Titian. It is needless to recapitulate here what has already been said about the influences that combined to make Titian the very great painter he became, so that we may pass at once to the consideration of the spirit in which he dealt with landscape. It is a mistake to suppose that Titian was a true realist. As with his predecessors, nature meant a great deal for him, but art meant still more. He paints flowers and trees and mountains and the sky with extraordinary force, beauty, and delicacy, but, as far as truth of actual tone and colour is concerned, he can be just as arbitrary as his predecessors.

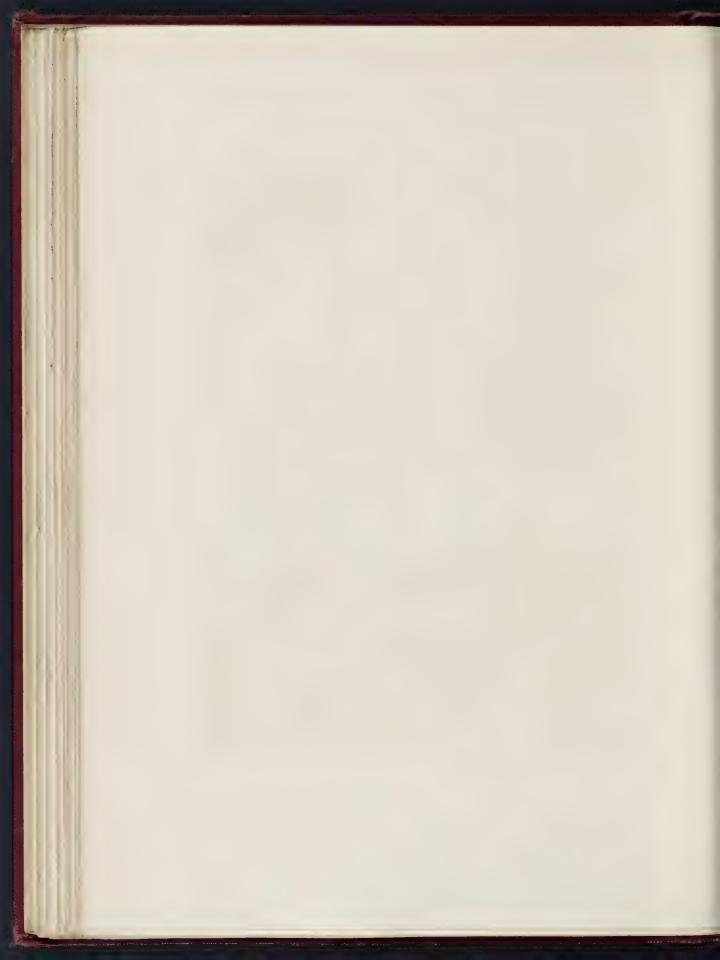
His real contribution to the science of landscape is his power of rendering one particular effect of nature with breadth and truth—'the rich quiet of the afterglow,' as a modern poet has aptly termed it. Actual sunshine he hardly ever seems to have painted, but rather chose the solemn moment that follows on sunset, when the world is still lighted by the warm glow of the western sky, but the shadows cease to be hard and definite, merging into broad, mysterious masses, from which a glint of gold or russet may flash here and there. Nevertheless, though Titian knows how to paint the sweeping lines of a mountain range, the insertion of the petals of a flower, the sinews of a tree straining in the wind, and the calm spaces of the sky at nightfall, vaster even than the expanse of ocean or limitless plain which he spreads under them; though the general effect of his landscape is

A BRIDGE OVER THE MOLE.

About 1807. From the Oil-Painting in the Assession of Alexander Young, Esq.







perhaps more supremely gorgeous and dignified than that of any other master, it is impossible to deny that in a sense the whole thing is often almost a magnificent formula.

Consider, for instance, two of his most important pictures in the National Gallery. Putting aside certain minor inconsistencies, the 'Noli Me Tangere' (No. 270) may be regarded as an almost perfect rendering of a not uncommon and exceedingly beautiful effect of twilight-as true to nature in its breadth of effect and actual pitch of colour as any landscape in such a key of tone could possibly be. Turning from it to the famous 'Bacchus and Ariadne' (No. 35), undoubtedly the more splendid work (it is perhaps the most perfect painting in the world), we must instantly recognise that we can hardly make the same claim for it on the score of truth to nature. We cannot say that the action takes place at any particular time of day-the foreground suggests the freshness of morning, the burst of light in the middle distance the brightness of the afternoon, the fiery glow on the chestnut trees to the right compels one to think of approaching sunset, while the colour and tones of the distance and sky are those which we associate with the coming of night. The deep ultramarine of the nearer range of hills is an absolute impossibility under any condition of lighting. And yet, in spite of all these inconsistencies, the picture itself is a miracle of consistency.

The blue of the hills may have been tremendously exaggerated. But if the work is viewed from a little distance, so that the colour scheme can be grasped as a whole, the reason of the exaggeration at once becomes clear. Just as the sharp notes of azure and vermilion in the dress of Ariadne focus and, by contrast, soften all the other passages of cold and warm colour in the picture, so the overcharged blue of the hill serves at once to focus and to soften all the other spaces of blue in the distance and the sky. Imagine the painting without that one deep tone, and you will see how heavy, lifeless, and monotonous the left-hand side of the picture instantly becomes. The fact is, a compromise had to be made between

natural truth and pictorial beauty, and Titian has sacrificed the former with conspicuous success.

The inconsistencies of lighting we have noticed may be referred to the same cause. By retaining here and there some suggestion of the brightness of day, Titian was able to give definition where he needed it, and to introduce in just the right places those flashes of light which give life to a painting. At the same time, by preserving a general depth of tone and colour suggestive of twilight, he was able to convey the sense of largeness and mystery by which the vigorous action of the piece gains an air of grandeur and repose. Viewed as a whole, the painting is a painting of twilight, but a twilight more luminous than any known on earth—a twilight that seems to have caught something of the fire of the immortal whose passion it reveals.

The artistic convenience of this Titianic twilight was at once recognised by the master's contemporaries. The impetuous daring of Tintoret introduced new elements of freedom and force, not infrequently verging upon the theatrical, but the innovations thus introduced led to nothing except a looser and more accidental handling. In the hands of Titian's other contemporaries and followers, with the exception of Savoldo, who paints effects of early dawn with singular truth and skill, his splendid pictorial convention was systematised till, as we have already seen, it became almost a recipe, but rarely refreshed by any original observation of nature, and as such was adopted with occasional modifications by the Carracci, Domenichino and Guido Reni. Of their landscape painting, although Constable himself seems to have found in it some element of freshness, it is unnecessary to speak at length, as almost all that they did was done better by Titian.

The living tradition of the art, as we have seen, did not remain with the Bolognese masters, but was carried on in the South by Claude, Salvator, and the two Poussins, and in the North by Rubens. Of these the Poussins and Salvator are undoubtedly the least important. Nicolas Poussin used the Titianesque convention very grandly, and there is a certain austere

simplicity and distinction about his work which makes his art an admirable text-book on style for the use of students, but his references to nature are so subordinated to his artistic ideals that he is more a professor of ancient painting than a forerunner of revolution. His follower, Sebastian Bourdon, in his best pictures introduces a new element of visionary caprice into the style of his master, which makes him at times an exceedingly attractive artist. Gaspar Poussin is a better-known and more important painter, though his contribution to the advance of landscape is not a serious one. While retaining much of the grandeur of design of his brother-in-law, he combined with it a very real feeling for the greenness of leafage, the cold grey of a cloudy sky, the shifting planes of turquoise and sapphire which make up a sunlit distance, and the motion of winds and storms. His art, though rather heavy, uninventive, and in some respects unobservant, is usually sound and sincere, while occasionally, as in the 'Sacrifice of Isaac,' in the National Gallery, it may quite rightly be called majestic.

Salvator was a far more striking personality, and has had far more influence on the art world. It is the fashion to despise him nowadays, to insist on the shallowness of his feeling, the vulgarity of his taste, and his failings as a painter. Such an attitude is perhaps only a natural reaction from the exaggerated esteem in which he was once held. Yet, although we have outlived 'The Castle of Otranto,' and because we have come to take a practical, nay, almost a scientific, view of life and literature and painting, there is no reason why we should be unjust to the ideals of a previous age. Salvator's heroics may not be to our taste, they may seem crude and melodramatic, but in them lies the germ of no inconsiderable part of our modern intellectual life.

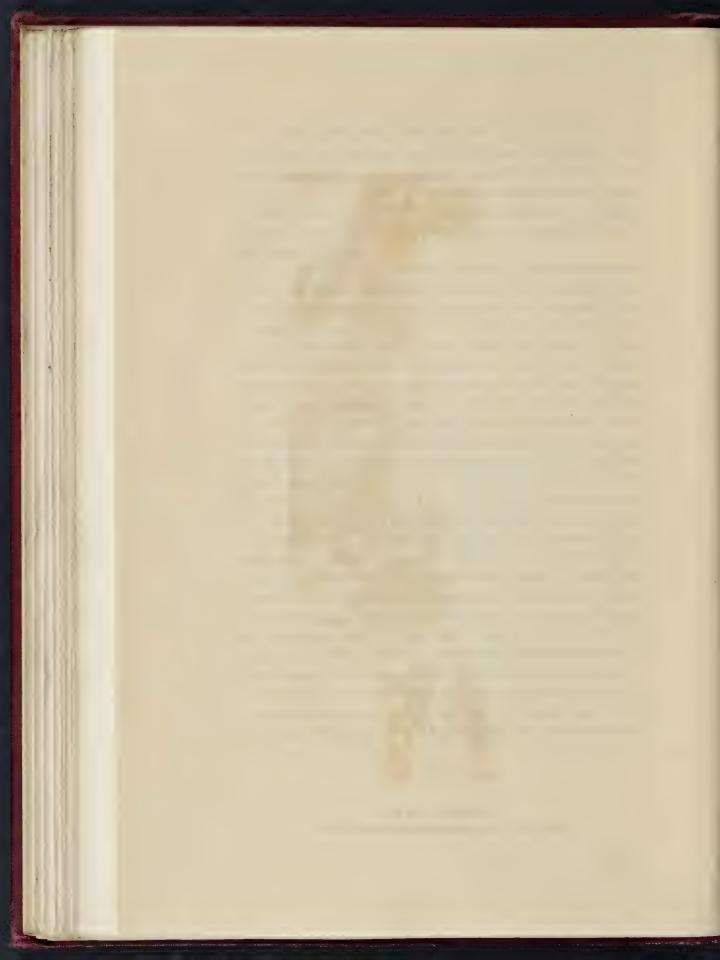
In Salvator we meet for the first time with an element of revolt in landscape—revolt from accepted canons of subject-matter of treatment and sentiment. He was not a man of supreme natural talent, and such talent as he had was not improved by the conditions of his education and his life. His originality lies in the fact that he could see that nature was not always

smooth and kind, that men were not always good and courteous, as his predecessors had pretended them to be. Irritated by the universal acquiescence in cheap optimism by which he found himself surrounded, Salvator rushed to the opposite extreme, so that his painting is almost a desperate caricature, which turns the solitude of nature into angry desolation and her strength to violence.

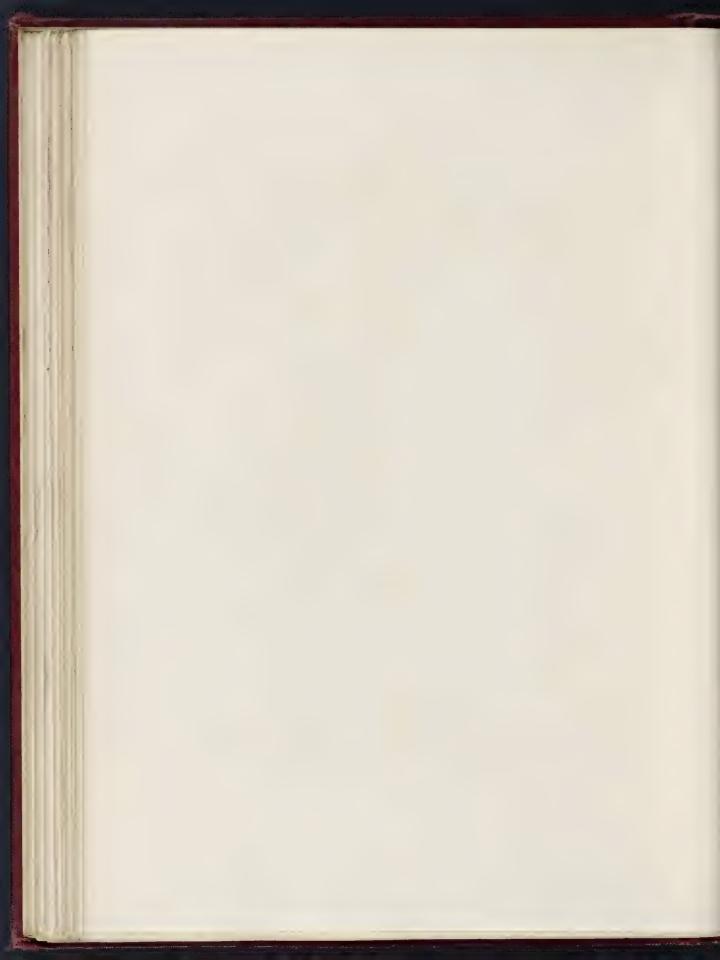
Such a frame of mind was hardly favourable to his artistic development. Though his landscapes are made up of rocks and trees and mountains and sky, Salvator seems always to have been too bent upon expressing his own temper to draw any of them as well as they had been drawn before. Nor can he be said to strike any new note in colour, or in design. It is only in the spirit of his work that he is a real innovator. In a crude and imperfect way he tried to express that sympathy with the wilder moods of nature which is now the common property of the civilised world, and if his faults are now only too evident, it is but just to remember that he was a pioneer, in whom some abruptness, some preference for rough and ready methods, is excusable. At any rate, he is a more interesting figure than many more skilful men who have been content to waste their lives in manufacturing the smug prettiness which, at least for its own age, is generally current coin.

Claude was a man of very different quality. When painting in oil, he seems always rather to fear originality than to seek it, so that the air and light and freshness and force of his sketches are half buried under an accumulation of the recognised properties for the staging of a work in The Grand Style. Nevertheless, behind those properties, behind the pretty rounded clumps of trees, the inevitable ruined temple, and the mild heroes who trip so delicately about their business, we are brought face to face with a real luminous sky, where the orb of the sun blazes in full view, and below it a wide expanse of airy distance, or perhaps a stretch of rippling blue sea.

From the evidence of his drawings, it is clear that Claude instinctively looked at nature almost as a modern might do, broadly, sincerely, and intimately. Had he but been gifted with a little of the spirit of Salvator—







had he been able to overcome his inborn timidity and dared to break away from the conventions by which he was surrounded, he might have become one of the greatest of painters, the maker of a new art, instead of being the model professor of the landscape of the past. In his sketches he displays not only the very marked feeling for space and sunlight which have made his painting so famous, but also a freshness of conception and an originality of design which make these little studies some of the most charming things of their kind in existence. In them he seems to have forgotten his natural timidity, and, without losing one particle of his refinement, succeeds in being pleasantly capricious, and even forcible. Here, too, his art becomes truly intimate in the modern sense—noting the peculiar features of an actual place, or the character of some particular piece of ground, and showing an occasional sympathy with the everyday life and work of the people about him, which is entirely absent from the ideal, unlaborious world which he paints.

In spite of all this originality, Claude's influence upon the art of the world has been almost wholly for the bad. His followers, as mere followers are apt to do, studied his defects more than his excellences, and neglected the natural elements of his art for the making of elaborate rearrangements of the theatrical paraphernalia with which it was encumbered. Landscape in the style of Claude thus became a synonym for the most narrow and empty of mannerisms, in which stereotyped formulæ for the painting and posing of a few stock properties were substituted for original observation and invention. Almost a century elapsed after Claude's death before the tradition of landscape which he started was revived from inanity by the tranquil genius of Richard Wilson, whose fame has perhaps for the moment been somewhat obscured by the more daring splendours which we associate with the name of Turner.

With the public Wilson was unpopular in his lifetime, and is hardly a favourite even now. Certain obvious mannerisms, and the not infrequent employment of mythological figures in situations where they are incon-

gruous-a fault pointed out long ago by Reynolds-may perhaps account for Wilson's being neglected, although it is said that this fault was originally due to the painter's desire to attract the public eye, by making his pictures look like the classical landscapes to which they were accustomed. It is curious, however, that his extraordinary merits should still be so consistently overlooked. Wilson can design most originally and most nobly even when he is composing on traditional lines. His feeling for tone, for air, and for luminosity is most remarkable, and excited the admiration of Turner himself. He is frequently a most exquisite colourist, getting harmonies of pale lilac and turquoise that even Corot, who is rightly considered the greatest modern master of such effects, cannot reach so surely. When we add to these technical merits the vein of deep poetical feeling which inspires every work that came from his hand, it is hard to understand why Wilson should not be loved instead of being coldly recognised as a good painter. In Wilson and Turner the art of Titian as developed by Claude reaches its culmination, and to study the evolution of landscape in other directions we must turn back to Rembrandt and to Rubens.

The difference between the spirit of Rubens and the spirit of Claude, between the landscape of Northern and Southern Europe, is a radical one. In the South all active life was concentrated into the cities. Painters were town-dwellers, who only made occasional excursions into the country, where, while seeking new materials for their art, they could bask pleasantly in the sunshine, observing the monotonous labours of herdsmen or fishermen from a superior standpoint; not without a certain sympathy, perhaps, for a life so remote from their own—a life that gained a certain nobleness from its very simplicity, but, by that same simplicity, limited to a very modest round of labours and pleasures. Side by side with this patronising interest in the more picturesque exterior phases of the existence of the lower classes, their surroundings might induce thoughts of another kind. Everywhere there was evidence that these fields and plains and vineyards, where that slow eternal ebb and flow of pastoral life went on, had been the spectators of a more

splendid order of things, and the natural operation of the fancy could rebuild almost without effort the fallen aqueducts and ruined temples, whose mouldering remains still bore witness to the power and magnificence of ancient Rome.

In the North the position of a great artist, such as Rubens, was more independent. He might spend much of his time in towns in the company of courtiers and merchant princes, but he had also his chateau in the country, where, when it pleased him, he could go and play the squire. Unlike the city man, who can choose a fine day for his trip, the resident in the country is compelled to see it under all conditions of weather, to observe the phenomena of the sky and the seasons, to be constantly abroad on pleasure or business, whether the sun shines or not. As a landowner he cannot afford to look upon his tenants merely as picturesque accessories to his domains. He has to see that they do their work properly, to understand how fields should be tilled and how stock should be raised, to have an eye for the 'points' of a horse, or a bull, or a sheep, or a dog, and to acquire a sportsman's knowledge of the habits of game.

Rubens was thus able to look upon the country from the point of view of the man who lives in it, and might without much exaggeration be called the real father of modern landscape. The country and the sky were for him no mere background, no possible dwelling-place for divinities, no possible stage for mythological heroes, but the scene of an ever-varying panorama of living picturesque activity, for which the changes of the seasons, the alternations of sunshine and cloud, the storm and the rainbow, the brown limbs of herdsmen and harvesters, the timbers of a cart or a farm building, the action of a horse or a bullock, provided a wealth of material. All is treated with such an easy breadth and rapidity of handling that the effect is irresistibly attractive. Nevertheless, in that princely ease and attractiveness one notes a certain aloofness. The landscape of Rubens is an account of country life as given by a lord of the manor, not the more intimate if less coherent and graceful story that a peasant might tell of it.

This aloofness is even more apparent in Rubens's great pupil, Van

Dyck. Van Dyck's drawings show that he had great powers of original observation, and an acute sense of the air and colour of northern landscape. His sketch in body-colour of a country lane, now in the British Museum, is absolutely like a drawing of the nineteenth century, rendering with the most perfect ease and accuracy the fresh, cool green of spring leafage and the faint blue mist that is the characteristic feature of our English summer sunshine. Van Dyck, however, was too intent upon being a great painter, in the then current sense of the word, to spend his time in following up what must have seemed to him but a byway leading to nowhere. His attitude towards nature is in consequence even more like Titian than that of Rubens. He observes and selects with the ease of a brilliant man, who knows perfectly what will make a fine picture, and is not troubled by any pangs of conscience as to the means by which he gets his result. Since he was by profession a portrait and figure painter, and not a painter of landscape, landscape with Van Dyck is but an amusement, and though his amazing natural gifts enabled him to paint landscape backgrounds with extraordinary facility, with a most exquisite sense of colour and design, and with a real sympathy for quiet and space, the result is in some way more flimsy and more artificial than the homely vigour of his master.

The influence of his graceful personality may be traced alike in the Fêtes Champetres of Watteau and the airy landscapes of Gainsborough. With Gainsborough, indeed, the true tradition of Rubens comes to an end. All other English painters, with the single exception, perhaps, of James Ward, have gone to Holland or to Italy for instruction. Gainsborough alone maintained the Flemish tradition of lightness and transparency, of dealing with landscape rather by a swift abstract of general tones and masses than by any actual imitation of particular forms and particular effects. Thus, while retaining the clearness and luminosity inherent in that tradition, and so making his pictures outwardly beautiful, the English master, from his intimate knowledge of country scenery, was able to combine with that outward beauty a dignity and truth of general effect that

SOPHIA LLOYD AND CHILD.

About 1807. From the Oil-Painting in the possession of Miss Lloyd.







it would be hard to overestimate. Modern science may enable painters to render values more exactly, to draw leaves and weeds more carefully, to paint every hour of the day with wonderful accuracy, but all their sincerity has not enabled them either to make pictures so outwardly beautiful as those of Gainsborough, or so profoundly sympathetic with nature in her solemn moods.

As Gainsborough may seem artificial and conventional by the side of the modern realists, it may be well to record here what Constable, the first of those realists, thought of him. He does not, it is true, go so far as Reynolds, who talks of Gainsborough's 'portraitlike representation of nature. Yet in his fourth lecture at the Royal Institution, delivered the year before his death, Constable speaks thus: 'The landscape of Gainsborough is soothing, tender, and affecting. The stillness of noon, the depths of twilight, and the dews and pearls of the morning are all to be found on the canvases of this most benevolent and kind-hearted man. On looking at them we find tears in our eyes and know not what brings them. The lonely haunts of the solitary shepherd—the return of the rustic with his bill and bundle of wood—the sweet little cottage-girl at the spring with her pitcher—were the things he delighted to paint, and which he painted with exquisite refinement, yet not a refinement beyond nature.'

In spite of this testimony to Gainsborough's sympathy with country life, it is undeniable that his attitude was really more like that of Van Dyck, the attitude of a great artist who looks at things from an exterior standpoint, than of one who represents country life from the inside, of one who has worked and suffered and laughed with rustics all his days, and so knows not only their outward picturesqueness, but can follow the working of their hearts and thoughts. If, technically, Rubens is the real forerunner of Constable,—the first to realise the splendour of sunshine and showers, of glittering meadows and windy skies, and to combine them into vigorous and brilliant compositions,—his true predecessor spiritually is Rembrandt. Rembrandt is the first of peasant artists and the greatest. With a profound insight into human nature, which can pierce at once to

the innermost recesses of the soul, Rembrandt combines a power of drawing and a sense of space which by themselves would entitle him to a place among the world's most masterly designers.

Thus Rembrandt's achievement in landscape, although it is perhaps the less important side of his life's work, marks an absolutely new departure in the art. Much of it is tentative, much is forced, as was natural perhaps with a pioneer attempting to extract the last atom of effect from the simple materials to hand, but the whole of Rembrandt's landscape work, whatever its failings, is so instinct with human emotion, so fully charged with the force of a tremendous intellectual power, that we are bound to accord it our respect even where we cannot give it our affection. He is the acknowledged master of peasant life, in comparison with whom Millet even seems a trifle heavy and narrow, so that as far as the people in his pictures are concerned, it is unnecessary to repeat what has already been said a thousand times. Nor is it necessary to speak at length of the solemn glories of Lord Lansdowne's 'Mill,' in which Rembrandt's powers are seen at their best; for the strength and sublimity of such a work must of themselves overwhelm and convince the coldest heart. His true greatness can really be more fully grasped in the places where his mind was less consciously intent upon appealing to our sympathies, as in the backgrounds to his figure pieces, his sketches from nature, and his etchings.

Here Rembrandt appears not so much the poet of the twilight, of those strong, broad contrasts of sunshine and shadow with which we generally associate his name, as a lover of the simplest things of nature. Consider, first of all, with how much sympathy and feeling he models the contours of the ground, the swell of a field, the abrupt declivities of a cliff, or the gentle undulations of a bank by the roadside. Note then how he deals with trees. Instead of making some grand abstraction of pillar-like stems and spreading boughs in the manner of Titian, or letting his hand sweep idly into the graceful curves and rounded outlines of Claude, he is content to accept the straggling dumpy clumps of humble foliage by

the roadside, and to draw them just as they stand; finding enough to amuse him in the odd twists and varied textures of their rough trunks, and in the passage of light through the multitudinous billows of their leaves overhead. With what sympathy, too, he deals with buildings, delighting not only in the crumbling stones of some decaying fortress, or the bold front of a great windmill, but marking even the mending of the thatch of a shed, the growth of a creeper, or the patching of a field fence.

This intensity of insight was peculiar to Rembrandt, and died with him. Hardly a trace of it survives in the single pupil of his who devoted himself entirely to landscape—Philip de Koninck. De Koninck, if not actually a great artist, was at any rate an interesting one. Perhaps it was from the prints of Hercules Seghers, which had influenced Rembrandt so strongly, that he got the first idea of 'those prospects à vol d'oiseau—of the caged bird on the wing at last—of which Rubens had the secret . . .—visionary escapes, north, south, east, and west, into a wide-open, though, it must be confessed, a somewhat sullen, land.' Whatever the source of their conception, these level tracts of country seen far away, lighted here and there by cold gleams of northern sunshine, under a sky that is rarely without a hint of menace, blend an air of unrelenting sincerity with not a little of the mystery and vastness of De Koninck's great master.

When we consider the Dutch School of the seventeenth century as a whole, the spiritual isolation of Rembrandt becomes more evident. Those who are concerned with tracing the development of painting may find a legitimate if limited attraction in the simple poetry of Van Goyen, the austerity of Solomon Ruysdael, the warm moonlight of Van der Neer, the homely gaiety of Isaak Van Ostade, the sandbanks of Wynants, the pale seas of Van de Velde, the minute finish of a Van der Heyden, the hot skies of Berchem and Both, or the dexterity of Karel du Jardin, Potter, and Wouvermans, but the real contribution of these men to the advance of art is small, if not actually negative. Vermeer's 'View of Delft,' in the gallery at The Hague, is a thoroughly sincere, dignified, and successful picture, but it

stands alone in the master's work, for his interests were diverted into other channels. Of all the host of painters, outside the School of Rembrandt, whom Holland produced two centuries ago, only three can be said to have any true interest for the student of landscape—Jacob Ruysdael, Meindert Hobbema, and Albert Cuyp.

Of these, Ruysdael is incontestably the most important, not only by the evenness of his technical accomplishment, which enables him, unlike Hobbema, to reach with almost unfailing regularity a not inconsiderable level of excellence, but also by reason of the very genuine strain of feeling which dignifies even his most artificial work. His cloudy, threatening skies accentuate most admirably the dominant note of his compositions, whether he deals with the pines and waterfalls of Norway, or with those aspects of his own country with which he has more real sympathy, the spreading, rather gloomy, plains, the steep banks, the formal lines of a bleaching-ground, the rugged masses of an oak, the play of light over the weathered tiles of a cottage, the shattered brickwork of a ruin, or the quiet seclusion of a pool in some forgotten tract of forest, where the trees decay and fall and rot away in utter solitude.

Hobbema is altogether a less considerable artist, although, owing to their rarity, his works fetch enormous prices in the salerooms. His compositions are, as a rule, too much worried and overwrought with an infinity of small contorted forms, which nullify the cloudy quiet at which he seems to have aimed. Nevertheless he has painted a few fine pictures, among which two of his works in the National Gallery, 'The Avenue, Middelharnis, Holland' (No. 830), and the 'Ruins of Brederode Castle' (No. 831), deserve special mention. Both are unusually broad and simple in treatment, the composition and painting of the skies being quite exceptionally fine. The former, too, is one of the noblest designs ever carried out by the landscape painters of Holland, possessing great dignity and originality, and conveying a very remarkable sense of height and space.

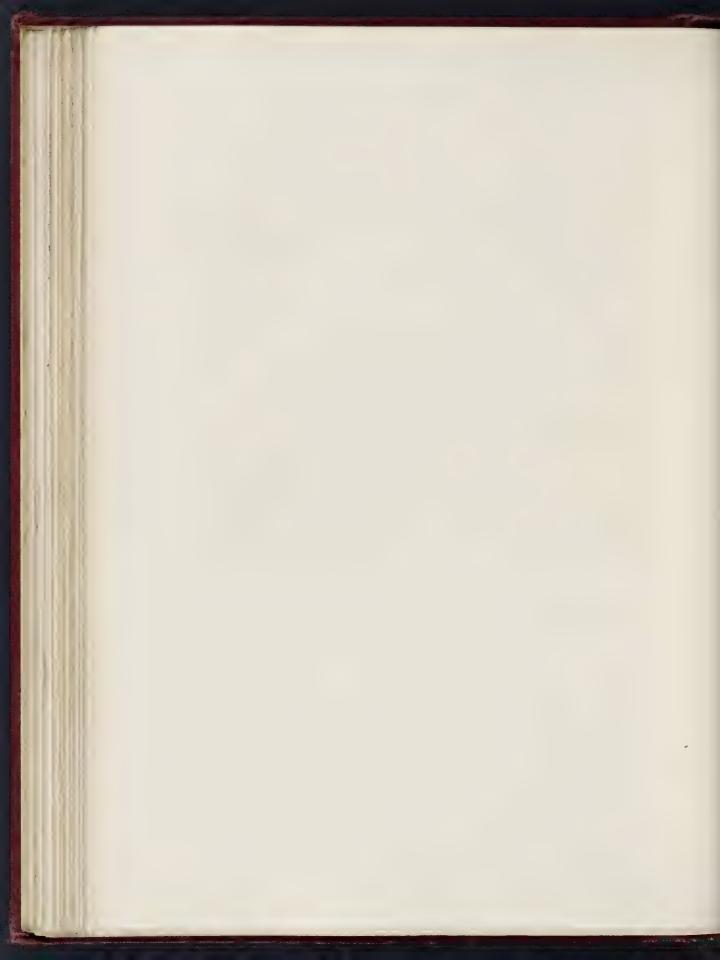
Cuyp is a more consistent worker, rarely falling below a respectable level

DEDHAM VALE.

About 1809. From the Oil-Painting in the National Gallery.







of excellence, but rarely or never rising to anything higher. Confining himself almost entirely to painting the warm grey and gold of drowsy summer afternoons by the meadows and waters round his native town, he seems to have acquired by constant practice an acquaintance with one particular phase of misty sunshine which gives his work invariably a certain regularity of success that in its sameness amounts almost to the result of a recipe. Any single painting of Cuyp will thus tell us practically as much about him as we should learn could we see at once the whole of his works collected together.

This limitation is not the failing of Cuyp alone, but in one way or another is the fault that vitiates the whole Dutch School, with the exception, of course, of Rembrandt. The painters of Holland were extremely skilful workmen. They did their best to follow nature; they saw that the homely life round them was excellent material for art, and, in so far as they were the first to make consistent use of that material, may deservedly be called original. Yet, although so much can be said in their favour, they are usually sound painters rather than fine artists. Very few of them can see more than one aspect of nature. As with Cuyp, their general tendency was to look hard at some particular effect of light, colour, or design, and to go on painting it soundly, honourably, and mechanically for the rest of their lives. Ruysdael is perhaps the only Dutchman who had more than one kind of subject at his fingers'-ends, and even his repertoire is strictly limited.

The truth is that all the Dutch landscape painters were interested in painting as a technical craft rather than as a form of creative art. Often enough there is evidence that they looked at nature closely, but not with the hope of getting some suggestions for a noble design, for a new scheme of colour, for the rendering of some great thought, some majestic movement, or some momentary effect of light and shadow. All they seem to have desired was a subject by which, when painted, their experience in the use of pigments and vehicles and varnishes, their skill in imitating textures and suggesting projection, or the sharpness of their eyesight and the nimbleness of their fingers might be prominently exhibited. Thus if they paint

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detail they paint it always as a technical tour-de-force, to attract the microscope of the connoisseur, and not from any love for the delicacy of the thing painted. They try, like the painter whom Reynolds met in Rome, to represent every leaf on a tree, with the inevitable result that their trees have neither the softness, the variety, the freedom, nor the massiveness of real trees. They try to paint the blades of grass on a bank, and can only accumulate so many hundred minute green strokes and dots, which have none of the essential qualities of grass—its tenderness, its delicacy, its freshness, or its mysterious careless infinity.

This passion for cleverness not only limited the landscape of the Netherlands to the painting of objects at rest—for objects in motion can only be suggested by a kind of shorthand quite incompatible with laborious detail—but also overwhelmed nearly always such genuine feeling for nature as the Dutchmen had. Hobbema, as we have seen, is but rarely a man of feeling. With Cuyp feeling becomes almost mechanical. Even the solemn thoughts of Ruysdael are disturbed and weakened by the same paltry conscientiousness. His large landscape in the National Gallery (No. 990) contains all the material for a really great picture. Nothing could be grander than the general conception of the piece—a view over a wide expanse of wooded country, lighted here and there by gleams of wandering sunlight that have evaded the rolling clouds overhead. The colour-scheme of cool greys and greens is admirably suited to the sentiment of the picture, the manipulation is as skilful in its way as any painter's work need be, yet the total effect is not satisfactory, is evidently the achievement of a second-rate artist.

The whole painting, in fact, is ruined by a false ideal of finish. The clouds are admirably grouped, and have obviously been studied direct from nature, so far as the arrangement of the large masses, the modelling of their forms, and the pitch and quality of their colour are concerned, but they are not natural. There is something formal, something monotonous, about them which makes one feel at once that they are only a convention. They have none of the accidental forms, the broken surfaces, the eternal

contrast of jagged edge, sculptured outline, and delicate mistiness, which make the panoramas of cloudland so infinitely changeful and exquisite. The fatal desire for smooth, dexterous pigment has intervened between the painter and his convention, and the freedom of nature has been lost in the prolonged labours of the studio, which have rounded each wisp of vapour into bulbous inanity, and substituted everywhere a tidy mechanical fretwork of convex and concave curves for the infinite variety of nature's drawing. The very light is chilled and dulled by this elaboration, while even the exaggerated sweep of their lines will not make the clouds move or seem buoyant.

Nor is the lower part of the picture more fortunate. The laboriously stippled trees have no more freedom or motion than the clouds—the very cornfields are as dead and stagnant as the pool in the foreground. Think, for a moment, how the subject would have looked had it been treated by a Rubens. You could not then have counted the leaves on the boughs, the bricks in the ruined walls, or followed all the swellings and hollows of each separate cloud, as if it were a thing of cast-metal. The trees would have swung this way and that, here grouped in broad masses, there standing out separately, so lightly and freely handled that, seen close, they would appear only as vague blots and strokes, but at a distance would have the mysterious individuality of things seen at a distance in nature. The walls would become mere patches of warm colour, a stone or two picked out here and there. perhaps, to give character and solidity, but as a whole so broadly and simply treated as to fuse perfectly with the rest of the work, instead of aiming at catching the spectator's eye on their own account. Think, too, how Rubens would have painted that sky. With what broad sweeps of grey and blue would he have given it fluency and motion, his very carelessness and ease corresponding in some degree to what is accidental in nature; and then with a few decisive strokes of vigorous impasto he would have added shape and contrast, life and force, to the whole, so that the spectator would feel as if he were in the presence of a real sky, melting into nothingness at one point, emphasising its presence at another by some ragged edge of angry

darkness, and luminous everywhere with the brightness and freshness of colour that is laid on at once decisively and for ever.

I have spoken at some length of this single picture, because the faults which make it a second-rate work are the faults through which all the observation of nature in the landscape artists of Holland was rendered worthless. Hobbema, doubtless, looked carefully at oak-trees, Van de Velde must have studied the sea, but Hobbema has never painted an oak that is like a real oak, any more than Van de Velde's sea is like the real thing. All Dutch landscape painting, in fact, is a studio convention, patient, skilful, and often pleasant in general effect, but failing, with all its conscientiousness, either to be first-class art or to be true naturalism.

The painting of the landscapists of Holland marks no real advance upon the discoveries of their great predecessors. The exquisite clear skies of the primitive masters, the gorgeous twilight of Titian, the rolling clouds of Tintoret, the serene sunshine of Claude, have each a truth and beauty of their own; while in the force of Rubens and the piercing sight of Rembrandt almost all that is strong and noble in subsequent landscape art has found its origin. To posterity, indeed, the Dutch example has, on the whole, been a hindrance rather than a help. By substituting dexterity of touch, conventionality of design, mechanical smoothness of modelling, and mechanical evenness of finish for the force, the variety, and the freedom which are characteristic of all the nobler phases of nature and painting alike, that example has served to set up an entirely false standard of excellence in art. It would hardly be extravagant, indeed, to say that the Netherlands are responsible, directly or indirectly, for at least half of the bad oil-paintings with which our galleries, our houses, and our salerooms are encumbered. A great mind, of course, can make use of such work, especially as a guide in technical matters, but can learn nothing from it which could not be learned more safely from Titian or Claude or Rubens.

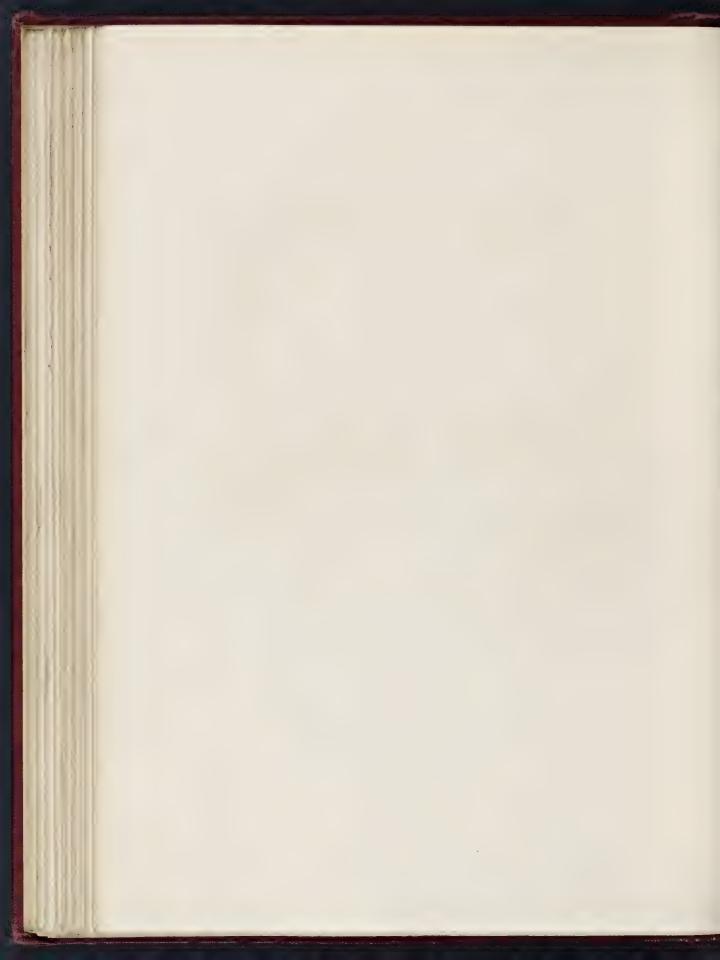
By the middle of the eighteenth century this false ideal had corrupted art all over the Continent to such an extent that any revival was hopeless, at least for the time. Only in England, where sheer ignorance and neglect

ON THE STOUR NEAR DEDHAM.

About 1810. From the Oil Painting at South Kensington.







THE PREDECESSORS OF CONSTABLE

had prevented the formation of any taste whatever for the Fine Arts, was it possible for a fresh start to be made. Even there the fresh start was unpopular. Gainsborough, who went right back to Rubens and Van Dyck for his technical inspiration, was just as unsuccessful in finding a market for his exquisite landscapes as was Richard Wilson, who had chosen Claude for his master. Gainsborough and Wilson, however, did not work in vain. Owing in a large measure to their example, towards the close of the century landscape painting was firmly established in England. Its credit was upheld by a number of vigorous and original artists, among whom were two or three who are now numbered with the great masters of the British School. Unless we take the work of these men into consideration, it will be impossible for us to understand Constable's position with regard to his contemporaries, and the exact nature of his departure from their practice.





CHAPTER III

THE CONDITION OF LANDSCAPE DURING CONSTABLE'S YOUTH

RT in England has always been a personal matter, so that, here, any marked success is an isolated phenomenon. In France or Italy genius seems less surprising, less accidental. There, a long-continued tradition of intellectual culture has prepared a soil where any strong plant will thrive naturally, and an exceptional bloom now and

then is no marvel. Here the soil would seem to be less homogeneous, less evenly tilled. Its general character is certainly more sterile, but is varied occasionally by patches of such unexpected richness, that when the seed is once sown the growth cannot fail to be a wonder. For this reason, perhaps, all organised efforts at improving British culture have resulted either in absolute failure or in a very partial success.

Of these efforts the foundation of the Royal Academy was perhaps the 46

most deliberate. It started under the happiest possible conditions, with one of the greatest and most learned of all painters as its president, and with two other remarkable masters among its original members. Yet almost immediately after the death of Reynolds the enthusiasm aroused by the movement ceased to be fruitful. The portrait painters who succeeded him were able enough—Lawrence, in fact, is too able—but their ambitions were limited to pleasing their public or to astonishing it by exhibitions of their dexterity.

Landscape, which had been freed from the fetters of classical tradition by Wilson and Gainsborough, relapsed in the hands of their academic successors to a state which was almost as hopeless as its condition early in the century. De Loutherbourg and Sir George Beaumont are not perhaps so heavy, so monotonous, and so incapable as was Smith of Chichester. A sort of stodgy grandeur in Sir George Beaumont, and some natural feeling for the picturesque in De Loutherbourg redeem their work from utter vacuity. In neither, however, can one find a hint of a liking for any actual object, or thought, or effect; neither in fact is ever really interested, and neither therefore can ever be interesting.

The natural taste of the British nation for sport and country life, for all that concerned horses and cattle and dogs and guns, found vent in an art which, though less pretentious than the portrait or landscape of the time, had more real vitality. George Morland was not a great artist, or even a great painter, and owes his lasting popularity more to our national liking for his subjects than to any high technical or intellectual gift. It is impossible to deny him a certain amount of originality, a certain extension of the range of painting, if we consider how much of the life of the English country-side he introduced into art for the first time. His painting, though dexterous and direct, is always rather shallow and artificial, being poor in colour, mannered in handling, and cheap in sentiment, yet it is less shallow, less crude, less sentimental, and far more skilful than that of nearly all the painters of similar subjects who have succeeded him. An exception

might be made in the case of his younger contemporary, Barker of Bath, an exceedingly unequal painter, who in his fortunate moments can be a solid and manly craftsman, as one of his works at Trafalgar Square (No. 1039), and the 'Lansdown Fair,' at South Kensington, conclusively prove.

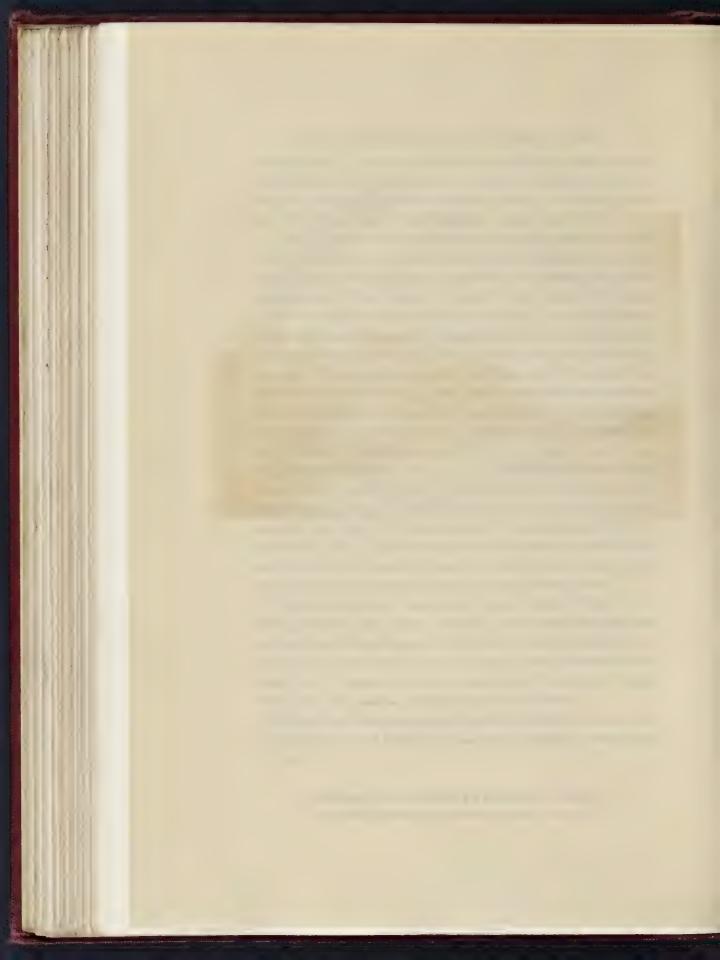
Morland's brother-in-law, James Ward, though less widely known and far less popular, was a much more remarkable artist. Though the landscape element in his painting is usually no more than a background, even in this subordinate place Ward's feeling for breadth of mass, grandeur of design, and force of colour, for movement, and light, and space, are strikingly evident. He possessed, too, a keen eye for the anatomy of nature-for the structure of a bank or a hill, for the fibrous growth of a tree or a plant, or for the folding of a cloud. These he models as easily and decisively as he indicates the bones and muscles of a horse or a bull. His landscape thus has a character of its own, quite unlike that of any other master of the British School, recalling the masculine vigour of Jordaens, nay, at times compelling us to think of Rubens himself. Perhaps because he only took to painting in middle life, when Constable's style was already formed, Ward seems to have had no influence upon his contemporary. In spite of his great gifts, his habit of thought and his manner of expression seem to have been too peculiar and personal to have been either fully appreciated or readily assimilated by those around him, so that, outside the early work of Landseer, it is hard to find even a trace of the solid modelling, the fluent brushwork, and the large design that characterise this posthumous heir of the great Flemish masters.

The interest which we take in the Norwich School is focused quite rightly upon Crome and Cotman, its leaders. Yet, as their biographer, Mr. Laurence Binyon, has pointed out, 'the Norwich School has no common bond of theory: it is their Norwich birth and training which constitute them a distinct body.' However closely in certain works Cotman may resemble Crome, there is an essential difference in their point of view.

Crome is one of the most original characters in the whole history of the British School, of which originality, in one form or another, has always been

GOLDING CONSTABLE'S HOUSE, EAST BERGHOLT.

About 1810. From the Oil-Painting in the possession of James Orrock, Esq.







the prominent feature. That an apprentice to a coach-house- and sign-painter, poor, imperfectly educated, living almost all his life in a provincial town, having only occasional access to collections of paintings, with a wife and family dependent upon him, compelled by necessity to be at once a teacher of drawing and an artisan, should have succeeded in evolving a style of painting which, on its own ground, can stand comparison with the work of the world's recognised landscape masters, is surely a marvellous thing; yet there can be no doubt as to the justice of Crome's claim to such an achievement.

In his painting, the naturalism, the intimate love of actual things and places and effects of light, which was first revived by the art of Wilson and Gainsborough, makes a great advance. Like Constable, Crome was a provincial with a deep love of his native county, which gives every picture of his, however painterlike and professional the treatment, a certain definiteness and individuality, which compel one to feel that he is painting a real place, and not some elegant creation of the fancy. Unlike Constable, Crome was from boyhood accustomed to handle paint and brushes. To his training as a sign-painter, indeed, no little of his artistic excellence is undoubtedly due. A sign-painter has to work broadly, directly, and forcibly, so that the dullest eye may not mistake the Red Lion for the Dun Bull. He has to use the simplest and commonest materials, he must also get his work done quickly. No time, then, can be lost in chemical or technical experiments, or upon the elaboration of detail.

Crome thus prefers to paint twilight or autumn, not only because twilight and autumn have each a poetry of their own with which he is in sympathy, but because the hues of twilight and of autumn are suggested naturally by the ordinary pigments, the greys and browns and yellows in use in his trade, and need only a touch of blue for coolness, or of red for warmth, to make a satisfactory picture. He designs in broad masses because breadth—'but a muscle give it brea(d)th,' he writes to his friend Stark—is the first business of a sign-painter. So, in the pictures of his early and middle period, it is

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rare to see anything done with two strokes of the brush, which could have been interpreted equally well by a single one. Only towards the end of his life, when he was attracted by the great reputation of Hobbema, did he begin to finish his pictures in the conventional sense. Although that finish never descends to the mechanism of the Dutchman, there can be no doubt that posterity will prefer Crome's earlier work, where nature seems to be arrested almost as if by magic, in a moment when she has put off her frills and furbelows, and is unadorned save by her own majestic beauty.

At such times—the 'Slate Quarries' in the National Gallery will serve as an example—Crome almost seems to be the Velasquez of landscape, so firm is his grip of the truth, so serenely unconscious is he of all that might interfere with its expression in the simplest possible terms. With him, in fact, the landscape tradition of the Old Masters experiences a very complete though limited revival; so complete that no further technical advance on the same lines is quite conceivable; so limited, however, as to be a source of danger to any immediate follower. For the founding of a new art, something else was needed, something wider in range and more pregnant with experiment, with possibilities of extension; so that with all his genius Crome has had but little influence on the art of the nineteenth century compared with Turner and Constable.

While Crome's painting seems to have gained much of its breadth and simplicity from the practice of the trade by which in early manhood he had to earn his daily bread, the art of Cotman was irretrievably warped and damaged by his poverty. Compelled all his life to work as a drawing-master, Cotman was never able to get rid of the tricks of his profession. His skill of hand, his fine sense of style, his power of design, and his feeling for colour, were too great to be extinguished even by the necessity of turning out thousands of drawing-copies; yet that necessity undoubtedly made him something of a mannerist. In the bulk of his work in water-colour there is more art than nature, and the art, though personal and effective, is too often obvious

and mechanical. Yet his more spontaneous paintings and drawings display such unusual largeness of conception, and such breadth and directness of treatment, that it is hard to understand why he should have been neglected so long. His smaller picture in the National Gallery, 'Wherries on the Yare' (No. 1111), is a masterpiece of majestic simplicity, while the more elaborate 'Waterfall,' in Mr. Colman's collection, is like the work of some English Poussin, so vigorous is the conception, so firmly is the whole united by the ordering of its noble colour-scheme, so truly classical is its serene reticence.

Had he always painted so, Cotman might have been one of the most remarkable landscape painters of the world, for he might have anticipated to some extent the discovery which the artists of Europe had to learn from the Japanese many years later, the discovery that a picture could be composed by colour alone, without the help of light and shade. As it is, Cotman's comparative failures are more interesting and more stimulating than the successes of the other painters of the Norwich School, who are no more than moderately accomplished craftsmen, turning out with praiseworthy diligence painting after painting, each in its way thoroughly sound, conscientious, and commonplace.

The forward movement in English landscape at the close of the eighteenth century was initiated by the painters in water-colour. Architects had long been accustomed to finish their drawings in black and white by adding washes of pale colour, but it was not till the latter half of the eighteenth century that the practice was generally extended to the treatment of landscape, though Dürer and Rubens, and above all Van Dyck, had proved its artistic capacity long before.

In the works of our first notable water-colour painter, Paul Sandby, body-colour is usually employed, but the greater delicacy of the aerial effects produced by the transparent method seems to have prevented his successors from following his example. The tradition of the English School of water-colour painting thus developed, not wholly to its advantage, from the tinted

architectural drawing. The ease with which a single wash of colour could be made to suggest space and light and air, which are difficult things to render with solid paint, undoubtedly led to an increased study of clouds and open-air effects, which prepared the way for the *plein-air* painting of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless this increase of facility is in a large measure counterbalanced by the intrinsic thinness and poverty of the tints obtained by washing, compared with the more varied texture and richer quality of the solid pigment used by the painter in oils or in body-colour. This defect, which even the genius of a Girtin or a Turner cannot always conceal, mars especially the work of the pioneers of water-colour drawing. We have, in consequence, to make a considerable allowance for an obvious lack of outward beauty in that work, before we can be quite just to the skill, the spirit, and the sincerity of its makers.

The drawings of Alexander Cozens, a natural son of Peter the Great who worked in England, are perhaps the most remarkable examples we possess of the beginnings of water-colour painting. Though they are executed entirely with pale washes of brown or grey, though they are too often disturbed by conventional finish, and marred by the inexperience and the awkwardness which mark the man who can only pick his way with difficulty, the sketches of Alexander Cozens display a freedom of fancy, and convey a sense of vast solemnity, which we do not find in the work of any preceding landscape painter.

The poetical feeling, and, in some measure, the defects of Alexander Cozens were inherited by his son. Like his father, John Robert Cozens was all his life a lover of space, solitude, and twilight, though in his later drawings he makes so large a technical advance upon the older formula as to become practically the founder of a new art. A pale grey monochrome is still made, but it is only a preparation for more elaborate work in colour. In his Swiss sketches the colours are few, light and cool—pale blue, pale brown, and pale green. Afterwards he uses a fuller palette, so that occasionally in a well-preserved

HEAD OF A GIRL.

About 1810. From the Oil-Painting at South Kensington.







drawing we can see how he really cleared the way for Girtin and Turner.

As an artist pure and simple, he can hardly be compared with them. He possessed that intense sympathy with nature in her grandest and most solemn moods, which marks the true poet, to a degree which among painters is almost unique, and could express his feeling readily and directly. Yet the fusion between thought and expression in his work is rarely quite perfect. His drawings, while they express noble feeling, are not always beautiful things in themselves. Cozens, in fact, is rather a poet who has learned to draw than a creative designer with a highly developed poetical sense. All the same, even when this deduction has been made and given its full weight, the value of his majestic sincerity remains unimpaired and undeniable. I am not aware of any recorded expression of feeling on the part of Girtin, but both Turner and Constable, who were neither of them lavish with their praise, did not hesitate to speak of the deep impression made upon them by their unequally gifted and unfortunate predecessor.

In Girtin much of the profound feeling of Cozens was combined with that largeness of mind and felicitous ease of expression which is found only in the greatest masters. In spite of ill-health, during his short life (Girtin was only twenty-seven when he died), he executed a large number of drawings of a very high level of excellence; so high, indeed, that Turner's saying, 'Had Girtin lived I should have starved,' seems no empty compliment to the memory of a dead companion. Turner, in later life, became an amazingly original and brilliant painter both in oils and water-colour, but during the time that he worked side by side with Girtin three can be no doubt as to which of the two was the better man.

In the multitude of the effects he obtains by the simplest and most direct methods, in the extensiveness and in the intensity of his sympathy with nature, in mastery of the brush, in the truth, richness, and harmony of his colour, as well as in the massive dignity of his design, Girtin is

hardly ever the inferior of his contemporary, and not infrequently surpasses him. Certainly his infallible taste makes him the best possible guide for a young painter, and it will be seen later how much in Constable's art, strange as it may seem, is due to his early study of the works of Girtin.

Turner, during Constable's youth, was a sound water-colourist rather than a great one. As a painter in oils he was more precocious, and had become a full-blown member of the Academy when Constable was still an undecided amateur. So precocious was he that his 'Calais Pier,' exhibited in 1803, is one of those astounding works of art about which it is hard to speak quite temperately. Its outward dignity and power entitle it to a place among the noblest landscapes ever painted. The sombre harmonies of black and dark green might, it is true, look heavy by the side of a gay facile Rubens; but has Rubens ever recorded an effect so terrific, or left so grave an impression upon us? Rembrandt is the one possible comparison, but it is difficult to recall a landscape of his, hardly excepting even Lord Lansdowne's 'Mill,' in which such a subject is treated so definitely and on so imposing a scale.

Nor does the excellence of the picture depend only upon its general effect. Whatever the eccentricities or the defects of Turner's later works in oil, no painter who really knows his business could deny that the 'Calais Pier' is, in its way, a supremely skilful piece of craftsmanship. Of the quality of the colour and the pigment in the figures, the sea, the boats, and the sky, it is difficult to speak in terms which would convey an exact impression to the lay mind. Think, however, of the soundness with which the whole is constructed, how every part is keyed into and harmonised with its neighbour over the great expanse of canvas, and is yet quite perfectly realised. Think of the piercing observation and the wonderful memory necessary to record the form of that breaking wave in the foreground, the crowded groups in the boats, each alert and busy on its own account, the dripping figures on the pier, and all the details of masts and

sails and rigging. Then note how the painting is done, how the clear, calm stroke of the brush follows with inevitable accuracy the barely perceptible curve of a stretched rope or a spar straining in the wind; note the playful ease with which figure after figure full of life and personality is created doing just the right thing in just the right place, or the almost photographic sharpness with which the swiftly modelled impasto reproduces the sudden outburst and instantaneous dissolution of the sea foam.

Nor is the 'Calais Pier' a solitary example of the perfection to which the young Turner brought the landscape method of the Old Masters. It would not be difficult to mention a dozen other pictures of his which in their way are almost equally remarkable. Turner's success was no doubt one of the reasons for Constable's unpopularity in England during his lifetime. Crome, whose mastery in a similar if more limited sphere was almost equally complete, was too little known, and James Ward was perhaps too mannered to influence public opinion in the same degree. Girtin had died too young for popularity, and his solemn strength was for the moment obscured by the more pretentious art of his successors. Turner, however much controversy might rage round his experiments, however much laughter his peculiarities might cause, was one of the most famous and prosperous painters of his time; and his undeniable genius could not fail to absorb the respect and attention of even original and independent minds.

To sum up, then: the aim of the greatest painters working during Constable's youth was not the creation of a new art, but the perfecting of the traditional method. Even the younger art of water-colour, as exemplified in Girtin, retained a certain dignity, a certain harmony, a certain reticence, which were at least not alien to the older ideal. The characteristic features of that ideal have already been indicated. The painters of the past looked on nature as so much raw material from which they were free to select what they wanted, and to work it up at their pleasure into some subtly

planned combination of beautiful forms and beautiful colours. All that would not harmonise with such a combination, however charming or interesting it might be in itself, was unhesitatingly sacrificed to attain that end. They preferred a general tone of brown or grey, not because they were blind to nature's fresh greens and sharp blues, but because fresh greens and sharp blues could not be readily translated into their sober, dignified pictorial schemes. For the same reason they avoided nature's more violent contrasts of dazzling sunlight and deep shadow. Their first aim was to make their painting artistic—a thing of beauty deliberately planned and constructed, and only true to natural facts just as far as was consistent with utter and absolute truth to its own perfect harmony.

If painters in those days were content to be merely creative artists, and not botanists, naturalists, geologists, or meteorologists as well, their public was equally contented. Cities were not so large, and city life was neither so general nor so engrossing as it is now. The citizen wished his pictures to be beautiful pieces of handicraft, suggesting nature, of course, but never pretending to be more than paint and canvas made delightful to the eye. For any actual mimicry of nature he had little desire. Not a mile from his door he could, if he wished, see nature at first hand. When cities grew larger, and life in them became more absorbing, such references to nature had to become rare luxuries. In their place there grew up a longing for some more vivid reminder of the light and air and simple life of the country. To combine the satisfaction of this longing with the seemliness and harmony of the older art has been the task of the landscape painters of the nineteenth century.

In England the starting of such a revolution was particularly difficult. England, a century ago, possessed, as we have seen, several great and vigorous artists who used their materials, however new and original those materials were in themselves, according to the ancient traditional method. On the Continent landscape had practically ceased to exist, so that when the seed

CHURCH PORCH, EAST BERGHOLT, SUFFOLK.

Exhibited 1811. From the Oil-Painting in the Tate Gallery, Millbank.







of novelty was sown by Constable, it fell upon a soil that had long been lying fallow, and was ready to bear an abundant harvest. In England that seed had to contend with other strong growths, already firmly rooted, and to that fact rather than to any innate sterility or hostility of the soil itself the struggles and anxieties of Constable's life were due.



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CHAPTER IV

CONSTABLE'S LIFE, 1776-1810

With the valley of the Stour, Suffolk was not the original home of his family. His great-grandfather was a Yorkshireman, who took a farm at Bures, near Nayland. Previous to the advent of this Hugh Constable nothing is known of the history of the family, which seems to

have had no direct connection with the other well-known families of the same name. Scott's publisher, Archibald Constable, called on the artist when in London, in 1824, explaining that he made a point of visiting every person of the name that he came across; but John Constable was in no way connected with him, nor was he related to the Mr. George Constable of Arundel, with whom he became so intimate during the last years of his life.

Hugh Constable's grandson, Golding Constable, moved from Bures to East Bergholt, about a dozen miles down the river, where he settled in 1774,

CONSTABLE'S LIFE

occupying with his recently married wife, formerly a Miss Watts, a house he had built for himself there. This large red-brick house has now vanished, but its position in the village can be traced from the sketch at South Kensington, which includes Bergholt church. Golding Constable was a man of some means. From an uncle he had inherited Flatford Mill, in the valley just below Bergholt. Afterwards he bought two windmills by Bergholt Common, one of which forms the principal object in John Constable's well-known sketch, 'Spring,' and is seen farther off in Mr. James Orrock's magnificent sketch. Golding Constable also became the owner of the watermill by Dedham Lock—not, of course, the large mill that now stands there, but the humbler building so often used by John Constable in the foreground of his views of Dedham.

For a boy with a keen sense of natural beauty few surroundings could be more fortunate. On the hill at Bergholt he could watch the windmills straining at their work, or lounge in the shade of the quiet old churchyard with its quaint half-finished church and curious belfry. From the brow of the hill he could look over the winding valley of the Stour, with its silvery willows, lush meadows, and glittering waters, stretching eastward to Dedham and Stratford and Langham and Stoke, and westward opening out to the sea. A short stretch of winding lane would lead him down to Flatford Mill, even now, in spite of its tall chimney, a perfect paradise for the sketcher. In front he would see the river spanned by an arched timber bridge, the lock with perhaps a passing barge or a patient angler, and as a background the fine old miller's house, with exquisite groups of willows and poplars round it. Behind, in the shadow of the buildings, the glittering mill-stream still sparkles and splashes, rippling swiftly away under the arch of foliage that rises by Gibeon's Farm—the white cottage where Willy Lott, as his epitaph in the churchyard on the hill records, spent every day of his long life. From Flatford it is but a short walk along the reedy river-side past Dedham, with its tall poplars and massive church-tower, that dominates the whole valley for miles, to Stratford and Langham, each a mine of good

CONSTABLE'S LIFE

things for the painter, although the Stratford Mill and Glebe Farm of the past are gone. Finally, at Stoke by Nayland one finds a village with splendid half-timbered houses, and a church which surely must be one of the noblest of all country churches, from whose lofty site one can catch a glimpse, very far away, of the scenery which inspired the youthful Gainsborough. Nothing in all this ten miles of valley is particularly astonishing, except perhaps the church and village of Stoke, yet it would be hard to name any other place in all England where a greater variety of picturesque material was contained in so narrow a compass. Constable himself invariably attributed his love for art to the beauty of the scenes among which his boyhood was passed; he continued to paint them, or scenes like them, all his life, and little but his personal temperament can be traced to the influence of heredity.

Golding Constable was a man of some character and ability, though of a practical rather than of an imaginative habit of mind. While thoroughly upright and religious, he was also a good business man, who not only knew how to look after his own property, but, as his correspondence indicates, could give sound advice to those who were seeking success in other walks of life. From him John Constable may have inherited some part of the pertinacity which enabled him to battle so long with adverse fortune, but for many of the most prominent traits in his character he was undoubtedly more indebted to his mother.

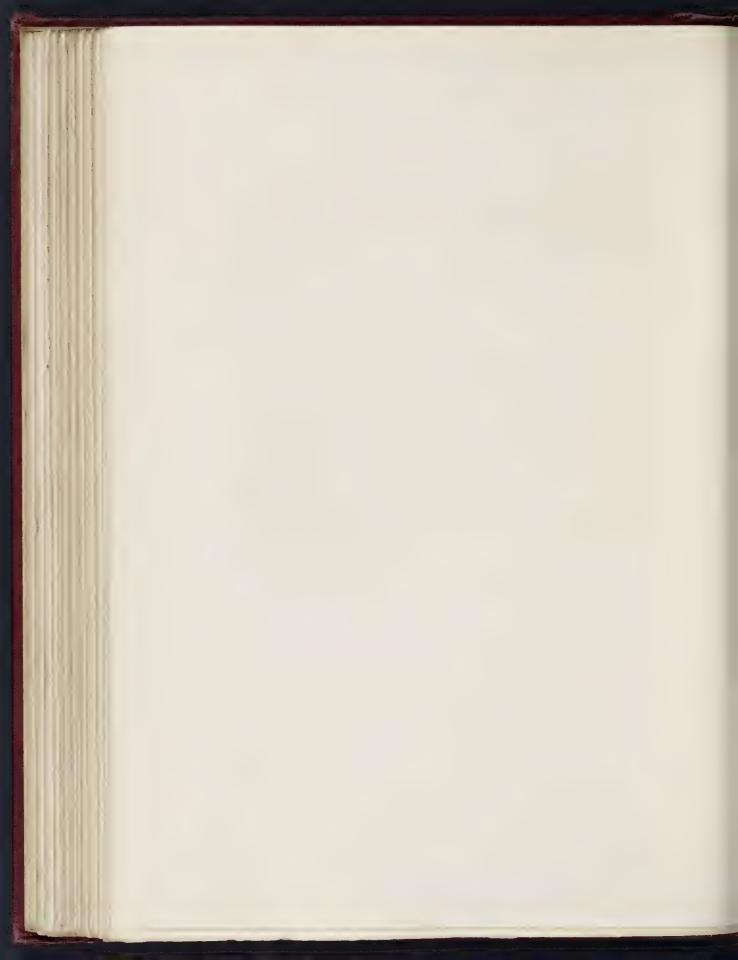
Mrs. Constable's letters show her to have been exceptionally endowed with those qualities which go to the making of a really good woman. Her character in its main outlines is suggested by her large, firm, open, and yet sensitive handwriting. Of her sympathy and tact in dealing with the troubles of her gifted son it is impossible to speak too highly; and the sound judgment underlying that tact and sympathy is equally remarkable. She possessed also the far more rare gift of a large and open mind, which was capable of understanding that an artist's career, however hopeless from a commercial point of view it might seem to be, was not of necessity the

VIEW ON THE STOUR (FLATFORD MILL).

1811. From the Oil-Painting at South Kensington.







same thing as a wasted life. Her persistent confidence in her son's ultimate success, while it excites our admiration even now, had, a century ago, far more to do with helping in that success than the casual student of Constable's life might imagine. John Constable, like most artists, was a man of an intensely sensitive nature, to whom sympathy of one sort or another was a necessity. In later life he could rely on the support of his friend Archdeacon Fisher, but at the outset of his career there can be no doubt that the encouragement he received from his mother's trust in his powers was a potent factor in enabling him to employ those powers in the way his taste and feeling had pointed out.

John Constable was born at Bergholt on June 11, 1776. Though exceedingly delicate as an infant, he grew up into a strong boy, and was first sent to a boarding-school, about fifteen miles from home, at the age of seven. From this school he was removed to one at Lavenham, where he suffered much at the hands of a flogging usher, who was left in charge of the boys by the love-sick headmaster. Finally he went to the old grammar-school at Dedham, where in the headmaster, Dr. Grimwood, he found a real friend. He does not seem to have been much of a scholar. Unusual skill in penmanship was his chief merit, but he also acquired some knowledge of Latin, and from the intelligence in many matters displayed in his correspondence, it is evident that his time at school was not wasted, although his energies were not entirely controlled by the current channels of teaching.

By the time he was sixteen his admiration for the scenery of the Stour valley had already begun to take practical shape. He had found a friend of like tastes in John Dunthorne, a plumber and glazier, who lived in a cottage near the gate of his father's house, and with him he spent all his spare time, painting either in the open air, in Dunthorne's cottage, or in a hired room in the village; for Golding Constable, being a practical man, did not like the idea of his son's embarking on so uncertain and unprofitable a career as that of a professional painter, and so he could not work at home. Dr. Grimwood seems to have been more indulgent, for Leslie tells

how 'during his French lessons a long pause would frequently occur, which his master would be the first to break, saying, "Go on, I am not asleep. Oh! now I see you are in your painting-room."'

This early acquaintance with paints and brushes was no doubt exceedingly stimulating to Constable's talent. Nevertheless, one cannot attribute to it the remarkable results that occurred in the similar case of Crome. Crome's master knew at least the tradition, such as it was, of his own trade, and could therefore teach his apprentice the elementary principles of using oil-paint in a workmanlike way. John Dunthorne appears to have had far less technical knowledge, and was dependent on such devices as experiment and his very considerable native ingenuity could suggest. Now oil-painting, though it looks simple enough to the layman's eye, is in reality far too complex a process to be mastered so. The practice of a professional artist, which looks so direct and simple, is in reality the result of the accumulated experience of centuries, and Constable's efforts at painting from nature with Dunthorne do not seem to have done much more than teach him how difficult a thing art was. That in itself was no small lesson. The pupil of a great or even of a good master makes amazingly rapid progress at first, so long as he keeps to the style of his teacher. It is only in later life, if he wishes to express his own thoughts, that he finds out the difficulty of the art he seemed to have learned. Then, too often, he gets afraid of failure, and is content to remain a follower and an imitator. Constable, being compelled from the first to find out things for himself, could labour under no such delusion.

Golding Constable wished his son to take orders, but finding him disinclined towards the clerical profession, arranged that when he left school at the age of seventeen he should be trained as a miller. John Constable, therefore, during the next year or so, devoted his attention to business, working both in the watermill at Flatford and in the windmill then standing on East Bergholt Common. At Flatford he learned by heart the beauties of Suffolk riverside scenery, until he knew every aspect of the dark elms

over Willy Lott's Cottage, the waving poplars by the main river, the shivering willows that lie westward in the direction of Dedham, with the broad reedy pools under them, as well as the slow passage of the barges with their gaily caparisoned horses, the mechanism of locks, the texture and colour of the old weedy posts and piles round them, and the foaming outburst of the clear stream below the mill. On Bergholt Common he was bound as a good miller to watch every appearance of the sky; to know from the shapes and movements of the clouds what the weather was going to be twelve hours ahead. This unprofessional training gave him the amazing knowledge of the phenomena of the atmosphere, which marks the exact season, prevalent wind, and time of day in all his painting. His grip of the machinery of wind and water mills was equally sound. As his younger brother Abram remarked to Leslie: 'When I look at a mill painted by John, I see that it will go round, which is not always the case with those by other artists.'

His attention to these duties did not, however, prevent Constable from continuing his favourite study. The Dowager Lady Beaumont then lived at Dedham, and was occasionally visited by her son, Sir George Beaumont, more famous nowadays as a collector than as an artist. Constable obtained through his mother an introduction to Sir George, who took a fancy to the young man, and showed him some of his pictures, among them certain drawings by Girtin, and the little Claude, the 'Landscape with Figures' now in the National Gallery (No. 61). The sight of this picture was regarded by Constable as one of the important incidents of his life. The earliest dated work of his which I have seen is a 'Study after Claude,' rather feebly and timidly executed in sepia, and dated 1795. The influence of Girtin does not appear in his work till some years later, and for a time the artistic bent of the young man's mind was somewhat unsettled.

That his inclination towards painting was as strong as ever may be guessed from the fact that in 1795, when Constable was just nineteen, his father allowed him to visit London to find out what his chances of success were likely to be. He was furnished with an introduction to Joseph

Farington, R.A., who had been a pupil of Richard Wilson. Farington was not himself a great artist, but was sufficiently open-minded to recognise the young man's originality, and to tell him that his style of landscape would one day 'form a distinct feature in the art.' Constable did not become a pupil of Farington, though the heavy pigment of some of his early pictures indicates that he learned about this time something of the technical tradition of Wilson. His thoughts were attracted rather more strongly in another direction by an acquaintance with John Thomas Smith, the biographer of the sculptor Nollekens. Smith was able to give him much sound advice, and to interest him in etching.

Constable's history, both artistic and personal, is somewhat vague for the next year or two. He seems to have spent some of his time in London, but still more in Suffolk, where he read such works on art as he could obtain, painted a few small pictures in oil, made drawings of cottages to help Smith in a series of etchings he was publishing, and tried one or two experiments with the needle himself. Specimens of these drawings, dated 1796 and 1797, can be seen at South Kensington. They show traces of the study of Ruysdael and the lesser Dutchmen, but are still so timid and feeble as fully to justify Golding Constable's reluctance to allow his son to take up art as a profession.

In 1797 John Constable's chances of being a painter became desperate, for in a letter to Smith, dated March 2, he writes:—

'I must now take your advice and attend to my father's business, as we are likely soon to lose an old servant (our clerk) who has been with us eighteen years; and now I see plainly it will be my lot to walk through life in a path contrary to that in which my inclination would lead me.'

From this letter it is evident that even Smith had no great hope of Constable's ultimate success, and towards the end of the autumn the young man returned to Suffolk to resume his duties as a miller.

That he still continued to work at his art is proved by the drawing of Bergholt Church at South Kensington, which can hardly have been executed

LANDSCAPE WITH DOUBLE RAINBOW.

July 1812. From the Oil-Painting at South Kensington.







except at this time, and the similar painting in oil, which formed part of the collection of his son, Captain Constable. His persistence at last met with its reward, for at the beginning of the year 1799 he was once more in London, definitely committed to the profession of painting.

He was admitted as a student of the Royal Academy in February, and lived close by Somerset House at 23 Cecil Street, Strand. His time was now occupied in drawing from the antique, or from the living model, and in copying pictures of the Old Masters—he particularly mentions Agostino Caracci, Wilson, and Ruysdael. That he did not live in absolute poverty seems to be proved from the fact that he was able to purchase an example of this latter master for seventy pounds, in partnership with Reinagle, who was about a year his senior. He also copied about this time Sir George Beaumont's little Claude, which had made so deep an impression upon him as a boy.

A definite purpose underlay all this labour. He writes from London to Dunthorne:—

'I find it necessary to fag at copying some time yet, to acquire execution. The more facility of practice I get, the more pleasure I shall find in my art; without the power of execution I should be continually embarrassed, and it would be a burthen to me.' He spent part of the autumn of this year at Ipswich, and in 1800 spent some time at Helmingham Park, about ten miles north of that town. From there he writes to Dunthorne:—

'Here I am quite alone among the oaks and solitudes of Helmingham Park. I have taken quiet possession of the parsonage, finding it empty. A woman comes from the farmhouse, where I eat, and makes my bed, and I am left at liberty to wander where I please during the day. There are abundance of fine trees of all sorts, and the park, on the whole, affords good objects rather than fine scenery.'

This letter shows clearly how Constable was advancing both in the theory and practice of his art. I have seen no sketches that can be definitely assigned to this period of his life, for the interesting picture in the possession of Mr. Max Rosenhain must have been done rather later, yet the soundness

65

of the drawings made by him during a trip to Derbyshire in the following year proves that his system of alternately working from nature and copying pictures suited his temper and talent perfectly. These Derbyshire studies of 1801 indicate that he had now begun to appreciate Girtin, and the influence of that noble master becomes increasingly marked during the next few years. Though they have none of the force and contrast of his mature work, these slight sketches display a mastery of drawing and composition which are quite new features in Constable's work, and show that he had at last overcome the initial difficulties of his craft. One or two oil studies made on this tour prove that he was already able to break away from tradition and paint landscape in natural colour, although the effort was clearly no more than an experiment.

He was already beginning to recognise the difference between his own aims and those of the majority of his contemporaries, and in consequence kept more to himself than before. He left Cecil Street in 1801, and moved to 50 Rathbone Place. He did not, however, remain always in London, but paid visits from time to time to his beloved Suffolk. On one of these visits he became acquainted with a little girl, Maria Bicknell, daughter of Charles Bicknell, Solicitor to the Admiralty, who was staying with her grandfather, Dr. Rhudde, the rector of Bergholt. His friendship with this little girl, then about thirteen years old, continued, and increased till it ripened into a warmer attachment, which had a very considerable influence upon his life.

For the moment, however, his feelings were not strong enough to divert the course of his studies. In 1802 he attended a course of anatomy lectures, which he followed with enthusiasm, and for the first time had a picture accepted at the Academy. As to this first appearance as an exhibitor, Leslie remarks:—

'I think it likely he may have sent pictures for exhibition in 1800 or 1801, or in both years, which were rejected, as in a letter, apparently written in the winter of 1799, he speaks of preparing some little thing for the exhibition'; adding later, 'I have heard Constable say that, under some

disappointment, I think it was the rejection at the Academy of a view of Flatford Mill, he carried a picture to Mr. West, who said, "Don't be disheartened, young man, we shall hear of you again; you must have loved nature very much before you could have painted this." He then took a piece of chalk, and showed Constable how he might improve the chiaroscuro by some additional touches of light between the stems and branches of the trees, saying, "Always remember, sir, that light and shadow never stand still." Constable said it was the best lecture, because a practical one, on chiaroscuro he ever heard. Mr. West at the same time said to him, "Whatever object you are painting, keep in mind its prevailing character rather than its accidental appearance (unless in the subject there is some peculiar reason for the latter), and never be content till you have transferred that to canvas. In your skies, for instance, always aim at brightness, although there are states of the atmosphere in which the sky itself is not bright. I do not mean that you are not to paint solemn or lowering skies, but even in the darkest effects there should be brightness. Your darks should look like the darks of silver, not of lead, or of slate."'

In 1802 West did Constable a further service. Dr. Fisher, Rector of Langham and afterwards Bishop of Salisbury, procured for Constable a place as drawing-master in a school. West persuaded him not to accept it, convincing him that it would be the deathblow to all prospects of perfection in the art he loved, and went so far as to take upon himself the delicate task of declining the offer. The dilemma seems to have moved Constable strongly, for we find him writing just afterwards to Dunthorne:—

'For these few weeks past I believe I have thought more seriously of my profession than at any other time of my life; of that which is the surest way to excellence. . . For the last two years I have been running after pictures, and seeking the truth at second hand. I have not endeavoured to represent nature with the same elevation of mind with which I set out, but have rather tried to make my performances look like the work of other men. I am come to a determination to pay no idle visits this summer, nor to give

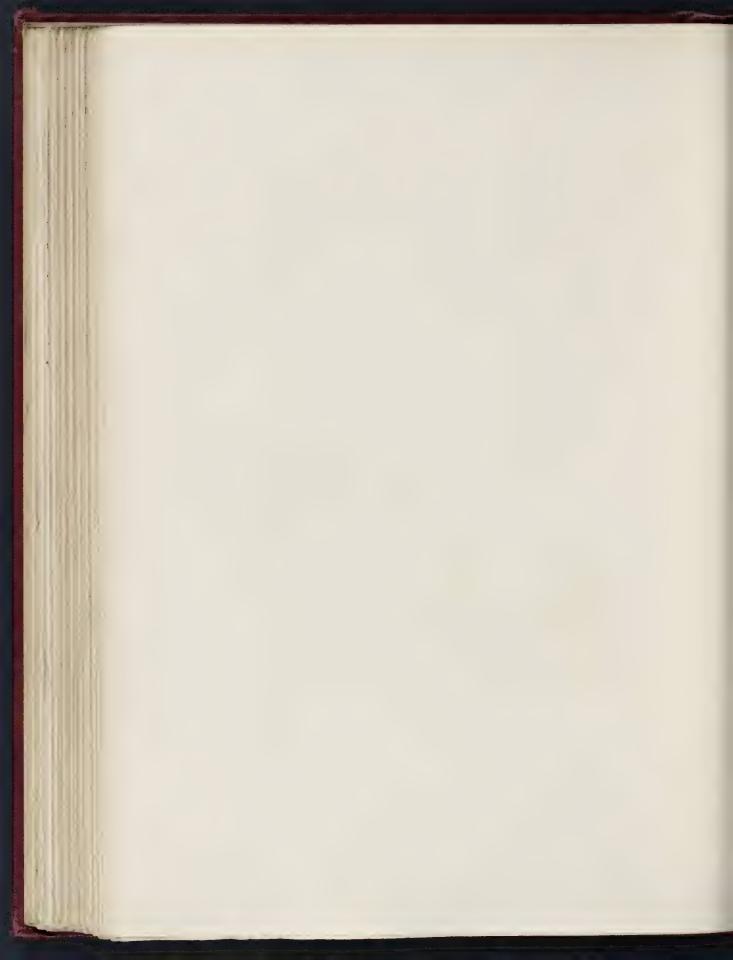
up my time to commonplace people. I shall return to Bergholt, where I shall endeavour to get a pure and unaffected manner of representing the scenes that may employ me. . . . There is room enough for a natural painter.'

The steady improvement in Constable's painting enabled him to appear at the Royal Academy of 1803 as the exhibitor of four works. In the spring the monotony of his labours was broken by a trip which he took in an East Indiaman from London to Deal. During this little voyage he made more than a hundred sketches, mostly in the manner of Van de Velde, if we may judge the bulk from the specimens at South Kensington. In the confusion of landing he lost all these drawings, but was fortunate enough to recover them later. His affection for the Dutch masters seems to have continued, for he writes that he has bought twelve prints by Waterloo, and four fine drawings by him. He also speaks of buying 'two charming little landscapes by Gaspar Poussin, in his best time.' His steadily increasing skill encourages him to add, 'I feel now, more than ever, a decided conviction that I shall, some time or other, make good pictures-pictures that shall be valuable to posterity, if I reap not the benefit of them. This hope, added to the great delight I find in the art itself, buoys me up and makes me pursue it with ardour.'

His newly found confidence may have led Constable in the following year to undertake a more ambitious task than he had ever tried before—the painting of an altarpiece with life-size figures. His 'Christ Blessing Little Children' may still be seen in the church at Brantham, near Manningtree, though it has been removed from its original position, and now hangs on the dimly lighted south wall of the building. Except as a curiosity, it is not worth visiting. Five or six years later, after copying Reynolds and Hoppner, Constable could paint a fairly good portrait, but his technical experience in 1804 was quite insufficient either for the composition or painting of a large altarpiece. The Brantham picture is thus only a feeble imitation of West's religious works, conventionally designed, feebly drawn, and rather incoherently painted. Those intimately acquainted with Constable's







method of treating the figure in after life might perhaps recognise his hand in the central group, but otherwise there is nothing in the work to show that it came from the hand of an artist of promise, much less of genius.

In his landscapes of this period—the 'Barnes Common' in the National Gallery, for instance—it is evident that he looked upon the painters of Holland as his masters in oil-painting, as well as in drawing and in etching, though recollections of Gainsborough also survive here and there. Towards the end of 1805, however, the influence of Girtin, which had been so strong in 1801, revives and becomes at last predominant. Probably, though no record of it remains, he had during one of his visits to Suffolk renewed his acquaintance with Sir George Beaumont's Collection. Increased experience had brought with it increased powers of appreciation, and for the first time he seems to have really felt Girtin's majestic breadth, richness, and solemnity.

The effect on Constable's work, both in water-colour and in oil, was immediate. In oil, the flimsy petite style he was forming in imitation of his Dutch models gives place to solid, rather heavy pigment, often very liquid, as if in actual imitation of water-colour technique. The colour-scheme, too, changes. In his earlier manner the greens were pale and light, the browns cool and transparent, the sky carefully modelled, almost wholly in black and white. Under the influence of Girtin the greens become dark and thick, the browns hot and reddish, the sky contains broad masses of blue, at times laid in with indigo, and fields are frequently put in with almost pure yellow ochre, modified perhaps by a glaze of brown. Constable, in fact, was trying to imitate in oil the schemes of colour Girtin invented in his own medium.

When Constable himself uses water-colour the imitation is even more conspicuous. During the spring and summer of 1806 he made a number of water-colour drawings of the scenery and buildings round Dedham and Flatford. These in handling, pigment, and feeling might almost be mistaken for drawings by Girtin, except that the suggestion of shape and structure,

which is the backbone of the older master's work, is replaced by an accidental freedom which, if it deprives the subjects of some solidity, affords some compensation for the loss by hinting at the inimitable variety of nature.

In the autumn he had an opportunity of trying his recently acquired knowledge upon an entirely fresh class of subject. By the generosity of his maternal uncle, Mr. Watts, he was enabled to pay a visit to the Lake District. His route may be traced fairly well from his sketches. Early in September he was in the neighbourhood of Kendal; and from that place he seems to have travelled northwards by Thirlmere and the Vale of St. John to Keswick, and finally to Borrowdale, which he reached towards the end of the month. He stayed in Borrowdale for about three weeks, and then returned home, visiting the Langdale Valley on his way.

The sketches made on this tour are most remarkable. The water-colours still show the overwhelming influence Girtin had upon his mind, and include many compositions of singular dignity and majesty. So fine indeed are some of them that it is hard to think of any other drawings in which the peculiar characteristics of English mountain scenery have been more grandly expressed. Such scenery is delightful to look at, but exceedingly difficult to paint; for the forms and colours of mountains are so definite as to dominate unduly all but the finest of designs. Constable overcame this difficulty with wonderful skill, utilising for his purpose all the devices which lowering clouds, drifting mists, sudden bursts of light, broad spaces of mysterious shadow, and the flash of water far away provide for the impressionable mind.

Yet these water-colours, while thoroughly artistic, are also to some extent conventional. They make delightful and impressive designs, and may suggest natural colour, but they do not imitate it. The true colouring of the Lake District is apt to be dominated by a monotonous light green, varied only by cold grey rocks, and is therefore curiously troublesome to the artist. Constable's water-colours are painted from Girtin's palette, where the green is dark and rich, and the grey is rendered by a noble subdued purple. The chiaroscuro, too, of the designs is pervaded with a delightful

sense of mystery, which, though most attractive in itself, is quite foreign to the moisture-laden air of Cumberland and Westmoreland, which usually either defines everything sharply, or shrouds it uniformly in impenetrable mist.

Constable, however, while in the Lake District, did not confine himself to sketching in water-colour. He made a certain number of studies in oil, not very numerous, which differ so utterly from the drawings that they might well be mistaken, even by an expert, for the work of another hand. In these studies, whose thin, smooth, careful painting contrasts strongly with the broad sweeps of the brush in the water-colours, the real tones and hues of the yellow grass, the dark patches of pine-wood, the pale purples of the hillsides, and the clear blue of the sky are rendered with remarkable truth. The effect is far less powerful than that of the water-colours, but almost makes up in sincerity (considering the period at which it was produced) for what it lacks in artistic force. One or two oil studies made in Derbyshire in 1801, and the sketch of Dedham Vale at South Kensington, dated 1802, prove that Constable had for some years made isolated attempts at realism, but it was not till his visit to the Lake District that these attempts passed out of the experimental stage.

Nevertheless, for some reason or other he does not seem to have painted, or even tried to paint, any important picture from these sketches. The 'Mountain Scene,' lent by Mr. Lionel Phillips to the New Gallery a few years ago, is about the largest work belonging to this period which I have seen, and even this is not much more than two feet square. No doubt Constable's natural taste had something to do with this disinclination. Leslie mentions having heard him say that the solitude of mountains oppressed his spirits; adding that his nature was peculiarly social and could not feel satisfied with scenery, however grand in itself, that did not abound in human associations.

Possibly, too, he was prevented from making any large picture out of these sketches by feeling that he lacked the necessary experience. The bright, fresh colour of his oil studies was so much of a novelty in art,

that he had hardly any precedent that would serve as a reliable guide for expanding them into large pictures. As every practical painter knows, oddities of composition and slight faults of harmony in tone pass almost unnoticed in a small sketch, but the moment the scale is increased they may become hopeless deformities. A large painting has in consequence to be constructed with a certain amount of scientific preparation that is quite unnecessary for the making of good sketches. Constable seems to have soon recognised that he lacked this science, and to acquire it returned once more with renewed earnestness to the study of the Old Masters.

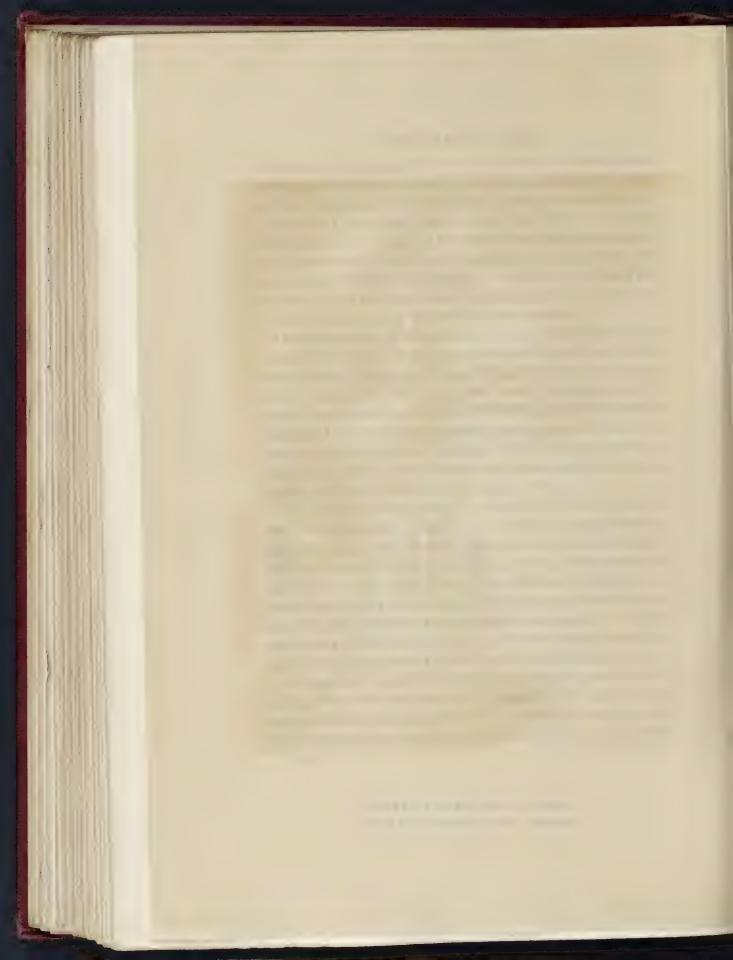
Fortune aided him in this endeavour. He was introduced to the Earl of Dysart, who wished to have copies of some of the family pictures in his house at Hyde Park Corner. Though the record of Constable's personal history during the next few years is very scanty—almost all we know is that his health suffered severely while he was engaged on this work—the change which took place in his painting is most remarkable. Most of the pictures he had to copy were by Reynolds, and in two or three years' time Constable had learned so much of that great master's technical practice as to paint exactly as if he had been his immediate pupil.

As an example of this alteration in manner, the altarpiece painted in 1809 for the little church of Nayland, a few miles from Dedham, might be quoted. Five years before Constable had painted an altarpiece at Brantham, which, as has been mentioned, is little more than a feeble imitation of Benjamin West. The Nayland picture, 'Christ Blessing the Elements,' was restored about twenty years ago, and apparently somewhat reduced in size and altered in shape, when fixed under glass as the centre panel of the reredos. Nevertheless it is still in very fair condition, so that there can be no difficulty in understanding fairly accurately what the artist's methods and intentions were.

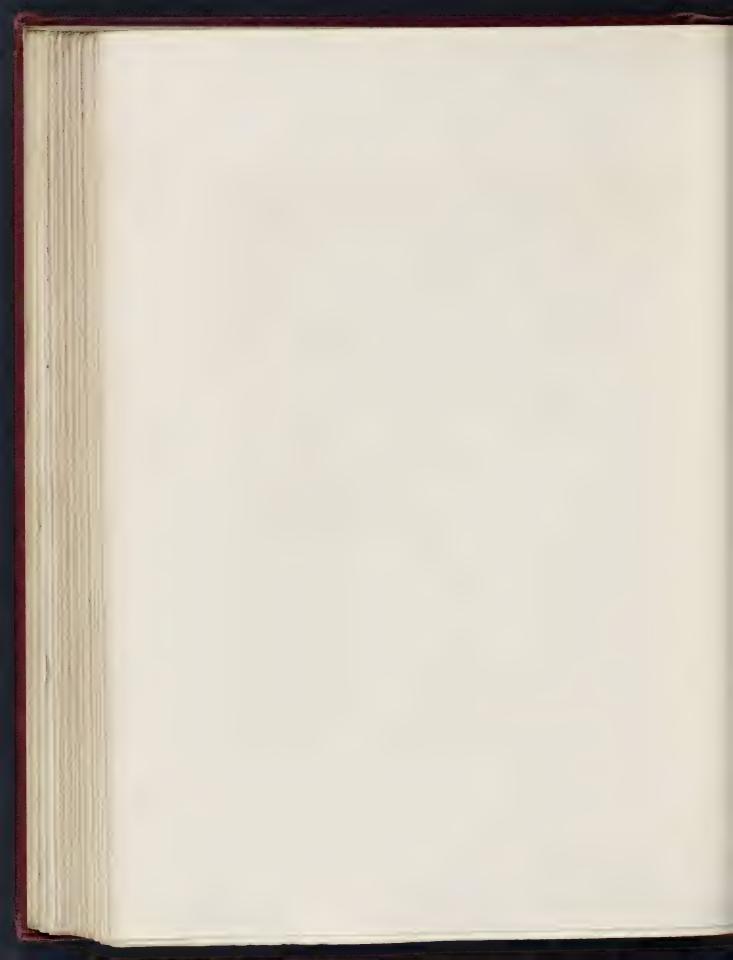
To those who are only acquainted with Constable's mature style of sketching from nature, the thing will be somewhat of a surprise. The painter was already thirty-three, and yet this work gives hardly a hint of the technique we usually associate with his name. Instead of bright, sharp

BOAT-BUILDING NEAR FLATFORD.

Exhibited 1815. From the Oil Painting at South Kensington.







tones of colour, free use of scumbling and palette-knife impasto, and the slightest possible glazing, we find a picture painted absolutely in the manner of Lawrence or of Hoppner when most obviously under the influence of their great master. The figure is admirably posed, and broadly and freely painted in deep, rich colour, which melts into a dark background. The whole work is either executed with asphaltum, or strongly glazed with it. The brushwork is vigorous and on the whole shapely, though rather loose in the head and hands. The small loaf of bread on the table in front is especially admirable as pigment.

This altarpiece proves conclusively how much Constable learned from his study of the great portrait painters of the eighteenth century. The accidents which compelled him in the first instance to copy Reynolds, and afterwards to paint portraits for some years, were really fortunate accidents. Portrait painting was the one branch of art which had preserved a real technical tradition, and a real technical tradition was just what Constable needed for carrying out his own intentions. His oil studies in the Lake District prove that his eye for natural colour was already developed, and his passion for nature had undergone no diminution, but he could not put his tastes and faculties to proper use until he had learned how to build up a picture, and it was this knowledge that his enforced labours as a portrait painter gave him.

The elementary principle of Reynolds's method, as we know both from his notebooks and his pictures, was a painting in monochrome, carried to a considerable degree of completeness, and then toned into a resemblance to nature by glazing with transparent or translucent colours. Constable now applied this principle to landscape. Shortly after returning from the Lakes he attempted a sort of compromise, painting first solidly in strong colour and then modifying any rawness or opacity by glazing. Dissatisfied with this method, which left the shadows too opaque and too disconnected, he became for a time almost an Old Master.

The picture 'At East Bergholt, Suffolk-Dawn' in the possession of

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Mr. G. A. Phillips is an interesting and beautiful example of the skill he thus attained. The whole work is practically executed in a delicate transparent monochrome, and no effort is made to represent the real tones and colours of the Suffolk hillside. Gradually, however, more and more natural colour is floated into the monochrome basis. The sketch of 'Bergholt Church Porch' (South Kensington, No. 138) illustrates the transition, while in the finished picture at Millbank the change is almost complete. The monochrome foundation still remains, but it has become quite subordinate to the exquisite colour of grey walls, deep grass, and dark foliage lighted by a quiet evening sky. Nature and art at last seem reconciled, and henceforth Constable's work proceeds without any hesitation in a straightforward and definite course.





CHAPTER V

CONSTABLE'S LIFE, 1811-1825



LTHOUGH by this time Constable was a man of thirtyfive, and had practically determined the principles on
which his future achievements in painting were to be
based, his private affairs were by no means so settled.
His acquaintance with Miss Bicknell, begun ten years
before, had developed into an attachment which for

the moment seemed hopeless. Miss Bicknell returned his affection, but intercourse between the two lovers was rendered exceedingly difficult by the strenuous opposition of her relatives to the engagement. Of these opponents, the lady's grandfather, Dr. Rhudde, the rector of Bergholt, was the chief. He was not on good terms with Golding Constable, and also objected, not without some reason, to the limited means and uncertain prospects of the struggling painter. Dr. Rhudde was exceedingly rich, and therefore his son-in-law Mr. Bicknell was compelled to agree with him, though it is evident that he had no personal dislike for Constable, and afterwards learned to esteem him properly. Miss Bicknell, at the beginning of the engagement, was only twenty-four, and, as a dutiful daughter, naturally obeyed her father.

The correspondence of the two lovers, as given by Leslie, is of no little interest as a human document. Underneath the outward formality of style, which keeps reminding us that we are back in the period of *Sense and Sensibility*, there is an engaging sincerity of thought and frankness of expression, which, if translated into our modern epistolary shorthand, would lose much of its delicate courtesy.

The difficulty of his position depressed Constable so much that his health began to fail, and to this illness Miss Bicknell's first letter refers, after the cautious opening, 'My dear Sir.' She continues with equal discretion:—

'I hope you will not find that your kind partiality to me made you view what passed in Spring Gardens too favourably. You know my sentiments. I shall be guided by my father in every respect. Should he acquiesce in my wishes I shall be happier than I can express. If not, I shall have the consolation of reflecting that I am pleasing him, a charm that will in the end give the greatest satisfaction to my mind.'

Two days later, November 4, 1811, she writes again:-

'I have received my father's letter. It is precisely such a one as I expected; his objection would be on the score of that necessary evil—money. What can we do?... You will still be my friend, and I will be yours. Then, as such, let me advise you to go into Suffolk, you cannot fail to be better there. I have written to papa, though I do not think he can, in conscience, retract anything he has said; if so, I had better not write to you any more, at least till I can coin. We should both of us be bad subjects for poverty, should we not? Even painting would go on badly: it could hardly survive in domestic worry.'

I have seen no letters of Constable that belong to this period of his life, but Leslie reports him as answering:—

'Be assured we have only to consider our union as an event that must happen, and we shall yet be happy.'

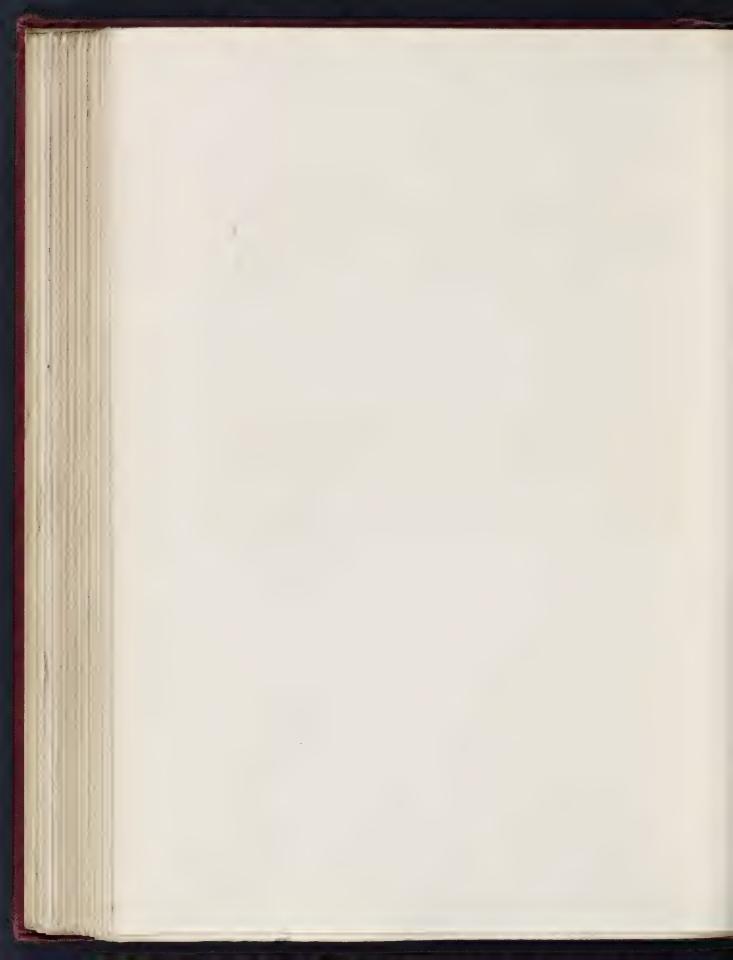
Miss Bicknell, however, does not seem to have been encouraged. 'You grieve and surprise me,' she replies, 'by continuing so sanguine on a subject

DEDHAM VALE, SUFFOLK.

About 1815. From the Oil-Painting at South Kensington.







altogether hopeless. I cannot endure that you should harbour expectations that must terminate in disappointment. I never can consent to act in opposition to the wishes of my father; how then can I continue a correspondence wholly disapproved of by him? He tells me that I am consulting your happiness as well as my own by putting an end to it. Let me then entreat that you will cease to think of me. Forget that you have ever known me, and I will willingly resign all pretensions to your regard, or even acquaintance, to facilitate the tranquillity and peace of mind which is so essential to your success in a profession which will ever be in itself a source of continued delight. You must be certain that you cannot write without increasing feelings that must be entirely suppressed. You will therefore, I am sure, see the impropriety of sending me any more letters.'

While Mrs. Constable did all she could to encourage her son to take a more hopeful view of affairs, Golding Constable advised him plainly to defer all thoughts of marriage for the present, and counselled a close application to his profession, 'and to such parts as pay best.' His immediate distresses were lightened by the companionship of his youngest sister Mary, who came up to London at the beginning of 1812, and stayed with him for about four months. During that time Constable's persistence seems to have overcome Miss Bicknell's reluctance to communicate with him, and a more or less regular correspondence ensued between them. How much her attitude had altered may be judged from a letter she writes in September:—

'Continue to write to me, my dear John, without the least reserve; the more I am acquainted with you the happier I shall be. We are both very unfortunately situated (but really you must think me very silly to tell you what is so evident). We can, however, make writing alleviate many of our troubles, and be to us one of our highest pleasures. I used to dislike it excessively, but now there is no employment I like so well.'

Rather later, when it seemed as if Constable's despondency would ruin his chances of success as a painter, she counsels him thus:—

'Let us wait with quiet resignation till a merciful Providence shall dispose

of us in the way that will be best. Believe me, I shall feel a more lasting pleasure in knowing that you are improving your time, and exerting your talents for the ensuing exhibition, than I should do while you were on a stolen march with me round the Park. Still I am not heroine enough to say, wish, or mean that we should never meet. I know that to be impossible. But then, let us resolve that it shall be but seldom, not as inclination, but as prudence shall dictate. Farewell, dearest John, may every blessing attend you, and in the interest I feel in your welfare, forgive the advice I have given you, who, I am sure, are better qualified to admonish me.'

The difficulty of Miss Bicknell's position may be judged by a passage in a subsequent letter:—

'I wish I could divest myself of feeling so like a culprit when I write to you. It would be so much pleasanter for you and for me; but I know I am breaking through rules prescribed to me by those I love.'

Two years later, in 1815, the position of the lovers seems to have improved, for in February Miss Bicknell writes from Spring Garden Terrace:—

'I have received from papa the sweet permission to see you again under this roof (to use his own words) "as an occasional visitor." From being perfectly wretched I am now comparatively happy.' . . .

In May Constable lost his mother, on whom he had relied so long for sympathy and encouragement, and her death was followed shortly by that of Mrs. Bicknell. These two bereavements naturally drew the lovers together more closely, and in the autumn Miss Bicknell herself was far from well. Constable was in Suffolk when he heard of her ill-health, and writes from Bergholt:—

'I am concerned to find by your letter that you are still so delicate, and that you are so liable to be hurt by any little unusual exertion. Pray take care of yourself. I am happy to hear that your father is so friendly and kind to you. I shall always venerate him for his goodness to you, who are all the world to me. I am sure you will believe me, my dear Maria, when I say

that I allow no bad disposition nor any wrong feeling to remain in my heart towards any one, for both our sakes. For should it be, as I trust it is, God's good pleasure that we should pass our lives together, it will be but sensible conduct, as well as a religious duty, to have as little to disturb our peace as possible; for as life advances our trials will increase, and at the end all our ill-conduct must be accounted for.'

Constable's mind was now still further agitated by the serious illness of his father, which made it impossible for him to leave Bergholt except for a few days. This illness ended fatally in May 1816, and in addition to the severity of that shock, the artist had to bear another trial. The implacable Dr. Rhudde had accidentally found out that Constable was allowed to pay occasional visits to Spring Garden Terrace, and Miss Bicknell writes on February 7:—

'The doctor has just sent *such* a letter, that I tremble with having heard only a part of it read. Poor dear papa, to have such a letter written to him! he has a great share of feeling, and it has sadly hurt him. . . I know not how it will end. Perhaps the storm may blow over; God only knows. We must be patient. I am sure your heart is too good not to feel for my father. He would wish to make us all happy if he could. Pray do not come to town just yet.' Later she adds:—

'The kind doctor says "he considers me no longer as his granddaughter," and from the knowledge I have of his character I infer he means what he says. I have not seen his letters. Papa says if we were to marry and live at Bergholt he thinks the doctor would leave the place.'

This rebuff seems only to have strengthened Constable's determination, for he answers:—

'You have always been so kind as to believe that my affection for you was never alloyed by worldly motives. I now, more than ever, repeat it; and I assure you that nothing can be done by any part of your family that shall ever make any alteration in me towards you. . . . Our business is now more than ever with ourselves. I am entirely free from debt, and, I

trust, could I be made happy, to receive a good deal more than I do now by my profession. After this, my dearest Maria, I have nothing more to say than the sooner we are married the better; and, from this time, I shall cease to listen to any arguments the other way from any quarter. I wish your father to know what I have written if you think with me.'

At his father's death Constable inherited a share of the family property, and this accession of fortune, though moderate enough (£4000), no doubt confirmed him in his intentions of marrying as soon as possible. He was now a man of forty. Miss Bicknell, too, was twenty-nine, and therefore felt herself of an age at which she had a right to consult her own inclinations. Matters were brought to a climax at the end of August by the decisive action of Constable's great friend, Archdeacon Fisher, to whom the painter had written for advice. Fisher answered:—

'My dear Constable,—I am not a great letter writer, and, when I take pen in hand, I generally come to the point at once. I therefore write to tell you that I intend to be in London on Tuesday evening, the 24th; and on Wednesday shall hold myself ready and happy to marry you. There, you see, I have used no roundabout phrases, but said the thing at once in good plain English. So, do you follow my example, and get you to your lady, and, instead of blundering out long sentences about "the hymenæal altar," etc., say that on Wednesday, September 25th, you are ready to marry her. If she replies like a sensible woman, as I suspect she is, "Well, John, here is my hand, I am ready," all well and good. If she says, "Yes, but another day will be more convenient," let her name it, and I am at her service.' He then goes on to press Constable and his wife to come and stay with him after the wedding.

Miss Bicknell's hesitation seems to have recurred at the last moment, for less than a fortnight before her wedding she writes to Constable:—

'Papa is adverse to everything I propose. If you please you may write to him; it will do neither good nor harm. I hope we are not going to do a very foolish thing. . . . Once more, and for the last time, it is not too

A CORNFIELD WITH FIGURES.

About 1816. From the Oil-Painting in the National Gallery.







late to follow papa's advice and wait. . . . Notwithstanding all I have been writing, whatever you deem best I do. This enchanting weather gives one spirits.'

There can be no doubt as to the course her lover deemed best, and the two were married by Archdeacon Fisher at St. Martin's in the Fields on October 2nd. After the wedding they went down to stay with the Archdeacon at Osmington.

John Fisher, Constable's greatest friend, who did him such signal service on this and on many other occasions, was at this time twenty-four years of age. His father had been Master of the Charterhouse, and his uncle, Dr. Fisher, was first rector of Langham, and afterwards Bishop of Salisbury. John Fisher made Constable's acquaintance in Suffolk, before his uncle's elevation, and the similarity of their tastes more than made up for the considerable difference in their ages. Dr. Fisher seems to have done all he could to help his relatives, and appointed his nephew John first to be his chaplain, and afterwards to the archdeaconry of Berkshire. His sympathy and common sense made him Constable's chief confidant, and the considerable number of the painter's letters to him, which are still in existence, is the best possible evidence of Constable's true feelings and temper.

Though the troubles of his courtship had often interrupted Constable's painting, they could not altogether hinder its progress. Anxieties of one kind or another prevented him from attempting any large landscape between the years 1811 and 1816, but he painted several small works of remarkable excellence, and made a large number of sketches and studies in oil and lead pencil.

The steady advance of his painting can perhaps best be judged from a comparison of the 'Church Porch' in the Tate Gallery, exhibited in 1811, with the 'Boatbuilding' at South Kensington, exhibited four years later. The 'Church Porch' is in its tone and handling practically the work of an Old Master. The 'Boatbuilding,' on the other hand, is said to have been entirely painted in the open air, and thus while the sound technical tradition

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of the past gives it wonderful strength, unity, and solidity, the picture grapples frankly with the shimmer of strong summer sunlight. The artist's palette is still restricted to quiet greens and browns and greys, but if it avoids the difficulties of aerial colour, the work is nevertheless a masterly rendering of the brightness and delicacy of aerial tone.

Constable's sketches show clearly that this limitation was entirely deliberate. As early as 1811 he had made frank and forcible attempts in his oil studies to catch the pitch and brilliancy of nature's colour: and the sketches made in this year are in this respect hardly distinguishable from those made twenty years afterwards. This force and frankness, however, he was still unable to employ on a larger scale, and so for the next few years he gradually modified his style of sketching, sacrificing brilliancy to some extent in favour of more shapely handling and more expressive drawing.

The amount of portrait painting he did during these years was no doubt in part accountable for this change of style. To obtain a good likeness and yet retain the impression of directness and freedom in the handling, every stroke of the brush must have its definite shape, speed, consistency, and direction. The desire to make enough money to claim Miss Bicknell's hand forced Constable to take to portrait painting seriously, and though the attempt in the end led to nothing, it left its mark permanently upon his technical practice. At one time, indeed, he seems to have considered his prospects in this direction were favourable, for he writes in 1813 that his portrait of the Rev. George Bridgman 'far excels any of my former attempts in that way, and is doing me a great deal of service. My price for a head is fifteen guineas, and I am tolerably expeditious when I can have fair play at my sitter.' A few months before his mother had been of the same opinion, for she gives him this advice: 'Fortune seems now to place the ball at your feet, and I trust you will not kick it from you. You now so greatly excel in portraits that I hope you will pursue a path the most likely to bring you fame and wealth, by which you can alone expect to obtain the object of your fondest wishes.' Constable's inclination towards landscape was, however, too strong

to be trained even by necessity into any other shape than that which nature had intended. The sale of two landscapes in 1814 seems to have made him finally decide to keep to the branch of his profession that he really liked, and from that time forward portrait painting seems to have been with him little more than an occasional experiment.

After their marriage Constable and his wife lived for about five years in a small house, No. I Keppel Street, Russell Square, and here their three elder children, John, Maria, and Charles, were born. Now that the artist was happily settled he was able to try his hand on landscapes of a larger size than those he had previously attempted. The 'Flatford Mill' in the National Gallery is the first of these, and can hardly be called an absolute success, for a certain heaviness seems to pervade the whole work and shows that the painter had not even yet quite found out how to combine the fresh colouring of nature with the sound principles of composition he had learned from preceding art. The opening of Waterloo Bridge by George IV. inspired him with an idea for a far more ambitious painting, which he at once attempted to carry out, but the technical difficulties of the subject proved so great that it was not till fifteen years later, after many alternations of hope and despair, that the picture was exhibited.

That he had already obtained almost complete mastery of his medium on a smaller scale is proved by the 'Cottage in a Cornfield,' shown in 1818. The utter quiet of this 'lone house in the midst of the corn' is emphasised, not only by the solemn, almost windless, sky, but by such a little natural document as the wagtail hopping over the cart-track in front, and by the solid, clean, shapely technique. From Constable's point of view the 'Cottage in a Cornfield' was doubtless the most complete expression his art had hitherto found, and its success must have encouraged him to show in the following year a far larger work, a 'View on the River Stour,' more generally known, perhaps, as 'The White Horse.'

For this picture, more than six feet by four, he asked a hundred guineas, apparently by far the highest price he had hitherto demanded. The picture

seems to have created a considerable stir, and there is evidence to show that at the time it was considered an unusually brilliant work, the silvery brightness of its colour being specially remarkable. Nowadays it is rather hard to understand this, for the general tone of the work is undeniably heavy and Captain Constable, the painter's son, was greatly shocked when he saw the picture after an interval of many years, noticing a great loss of luminosity, which he then attributed to the work being a copy or a replica.1 An examination of the painting itself suggests another explanation. The picture was painted by Constable almost in the same way as he made his sketches, that is to say, by working in thinnish paint upon a strong warm ground. The method enables evenness of tone in the shadows-an absolute necessity in any good landscape-to be obtained fairly easily, but it has one grave disadvantage. Unless the lights are painted very thickly indeed, and thick painting has a way of looking heavy or chalky, the opaque pigments used get more and more translucent as time goes on, till at last the ground shows through them either partially, so that the sky becomes patchy, or universally, when the sky becomes dull. Every one who has much practical acquaintance with oil-painting must have come across striking examples of this change, which indeed is one of the most serious difficulties that the landscape painter in oils has to face. Apart from this defect, the design is more crowded than in Constable's later works; nevertheless the picture contains so much good painting, that we can hardly wonder at the attention it attracted in its original condition.

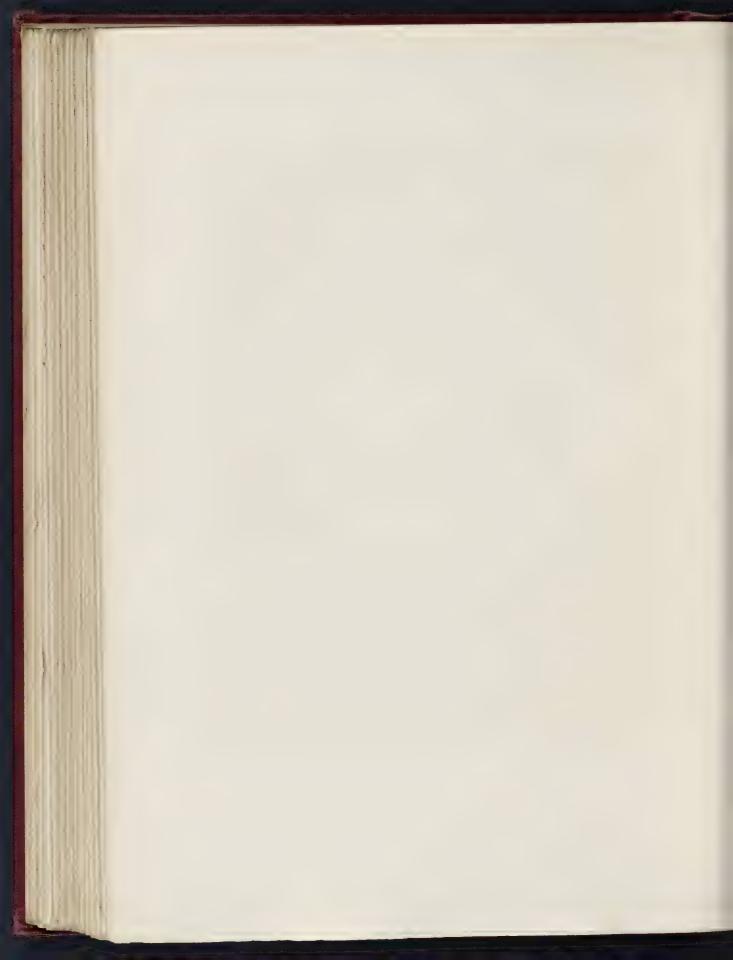
The painting was bought by Archdeacon Fisher, who in doing so gave another proof of his taste and foresight as well as of his friendship. The year 1819 was lucky for Constable in other ways. He now received his share, £4000, of his father's property, while his wife inherited a similar amount from her grandfather, Dr. Rhudde, who must have become more or less reconciled to her marriage. This addition to his fortune was most timely, for his second child, Maria, had been born in July, and his professional

A COTTAGE IN A CORNFIELD.

Exhibited 1818. From the Oil-Painting at South Kensington.







income was too small to make life easy for him. At the close of the year his talent was at last publicly recognised by his election to the Associateship of the Royal Academy; an election all the more honourable because he could feel that he owed it neither to wealth nor position nor favour, but solely to his painting.

Not that he was without friends among those of his own profession. For years he had been intimate with Stothard, in whose butterfly-hunts he had often taken part during his bachelor days. He was also extremely attached to Jackson, the portrait painter, and to Wilkie. His friendship with Leslie had already begun, though it had not yet become really intimate. Constable seems, too, to have known William Collins exceedingly well, though certain passages in his correspondence with Fisher show that his friendship did not blind him to the real worthlessness of Collins's art. On one occasion, indeed, his contempt finds vent in language not unworthy of Swift, both in its conciseness and in the schoolboy brutality of the metaphor employed.

Constable's chief picture of 1820, 'Stratford Mill,' makes a great advance upon 'The White Horse' in solidity and breadth of effect. Again Archdeacon Fisher came forward and purchased the picture, this time as a present for his solicitor, Mr. Tinney, to whom he was under some obligation. Constable spent the latter part of the summer with his friend at Salisbury and in Dorsetshire, while in the following year he went with him on his archidiaconal visitation, and saw Newbury, Reading, Abingdon, and Oxford.

Constable had made some sketches at Hampstead in 1820, and in 1821 he took a small house there, No. 2 Lower Terrace, which is still standing. A walk of a few yards from the door of the house brings one to the crest of the hill and the famous view northwards, which provided Constable with the subjects for so many of his pictures. There seems to have been no room in the house for painting, so he worked on his large picture at a neighbouring glazier's, and cleared a shed in the garden to use as a studio

for smaller works. A 'Hampstead Heath,' possibly the exquisite picture of 'The Salt-Box' in the Tate Gallery, figures among his exhibits at the Academy in this year, but his principal work was the large 'Haywain,' which was afterwards to produce such an effect upon French art. In the autumn he writes, 'I have done a good deal of skying, for I am determined to conquer all difficulties, and that among the rest.' The charming study of cirrus clouds at South Kensington (No. 784) will serve to show how skilful constant practice had made him in catching not only the force and colour of massive rainclouds, but the delicate evanescent curvature of the vapours that spin their airy threads only across the loftiest regions of the sky.

The 'Haywain' attracted attention outside England, for in the year after its exhibition Constable received from a Frenchman the magnificent offer of £70 for it, exclusive of the frame. He refused the offer, although his large Academy picture, 'A View on the Stour,' had come back to him unsold. Circumstances, indeed, seem to have been improving with him, for, after some negotiations, he decided upon moving into a much larger house, No. 35 Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square. The house had just become vacant through the death of its occupier, Joseph Farington, R.A., to whom Constable had been sent up from Suffolk for advice twenty-five years before.

In the spring of 1823 Constable was much worried by the illness of his four children, his eldest son John, always a delicate boy, being in an especially serious condition. Owing to this trouble, the 'Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop's Garden' was the largest work by which he was represented at the Academy. In this picture we note, almost for the first time, the manner of suggesting the glitter of sunlight by spots and scumbles of pure pigment, which is characteristic of his later manner. He had employed this device in his sketches for many years, but this is one of the earliest instances in which it appears in a large finished picture. He confesses that the work gave him much trouble. 'It was,' he writes, 'the most difficult

subject in landscape I ever had on my easel. I have not flinched at the windows, buttresses, etc., but I have still kept to my grand organ colour, and have, as usual, made my escape in the evanescence of the chiaroscuro.' In August Constable paid a visit to his friend Fisher at Osmington, and in the autumn went to stay with Sir George Beaumont at Cole-Orton in Leicestershire.

Here he remained for five weeks, the longest time he was ever separated from his wife and children. Most of his time was spent in copying his host's pictures by Claude, though he also mentions making a sketch of a Rubens landscape. In his anxiety to get home he confined himself so strictly to his easel that his health suffered. This ill-health was not due to any neglect on the part of Sir George, who continually pressed him to get more exercise and fresh air, pointing out that by over-application he was in reality losing time rather than gaining it. Constable's devotion to his art was however too strong to be influenced even by one who assumed so much authority, and for whom he had so much liking, and neither then nor at any other time could he be induced to take enough recrea-The friendship between the two men was as remarkable as it was creditable to both, for their views on art were diametrically opposed. The well-known stories of 'your brown tree' and the fiddle placed on the lawn to prove the difference between the colour of nature and that of conventional pictures, though they won't bear repetition, seem to be absolutely authentic. It is thus clear that Sir George Beaumont, whatever his defects as an artist, must have possessed extraordinary tact, amiability, and charm of manner to have made such a close connection possible, considering Constable's stubbornness where the principles of his painting were concerned.

A few months later (April 1824), when he had recovered from the effects of overwork at Cole-Orton, Constable came to an agreement with the Frenchman who had tried to buy 'The Haywain' from him three years before. He was to get £250 for 'The Haywain' and another picture, and he threw

in a small painting of Yarmouth. The price, though not high, was doubtless acceptable, for the move to Charlotte Street must have been expensive, and he had given up his little house at Hampstead. The effects of the purchase, however, were more far-reaching than he contemplated. 'The Haywain,' with two other paintings of his (the 'Yarmouth' apparently was not among them), was shown in the Louvre at the Salon, and immediately attracted attention from the novelty of its style. The stir made was so great that Count Forbin, the director, had the pictures moved to still better places, although they had originally been well hung. The impression made was admirably summed up by Brockedon, who wrote to Constable in December:—

'You will find in the enclosed some remarks upon your pictures in Paris. I returned last night and brought this with me. The French have been forcibly struck by them, and they have created a division in the school of the landscape painters in France. You are accused of carelessness by those who acknowledge the truth of your effect; and the freshness of your pictures has taught them that though your means may not be essential, your end must be to produce an imitation of nature, and the next exhibition in Paris will teem with your imitations, or the School of Nature versus the School of Birmingham. I saw one man draw another to your pictures with this expression, "Look at these landscapes by an Englishman; the ground appears to be covered with dew." Wilkie, too, when he saw the Exhibition, expressed his surprise that the painter of such magnificent works should not long since have been elected to full membership of the Royal Academy.

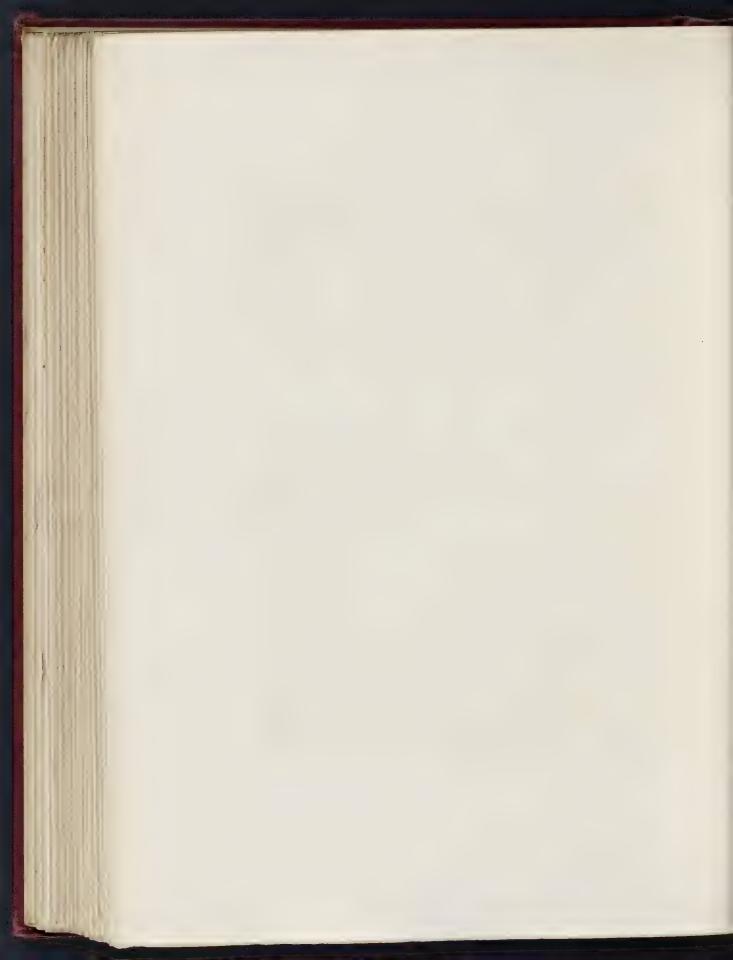
Constable himself seems to have paid but little attention to these criticisms, for he tells Fisher:—

'I am much indebted to the artists for their alarm in my favour. . . . They are struck with their vivacity and freshness—things unknown to their own pictures. The truth is, they study—and they are very laborious students—pictures only. . . . My wife is translating for me some of the criticisms. They are amusing and acute, but shallow.' Several cuttings

STUDY FOR 'THE WHITE HORSE.'

Exhibited 1819. From the Oil-Painting in the possession of Alexander Young, Esq.





from the *Figaro* containing articles on this Salon are still preserved among Constable's papers. In January of the following year he heard that the King on his visit to the Louvre had awarded him a gold medal, and had made Lawrence, who, with Wilkie, had shared Constable's success, a knight of the Legion of Honour.'

At home, too, Constable had been fairly successful. He had sold his Academy picture, 'The Lock,' for 150 guineas, and was able to say he would paint no picture, however small, for less than twenty guineas. He was some time at Brighton with his wife and family, but returned to London in June with John Dunthorne, a son of his old friend at Bergholt, who occasionally acted as his assistant. Constable had a great liking for this young man, and speaks of him in a letter to Fisher thus: 'He cheers and helps me so much that I could wish to have him always with me; he forwards me a good deal in subordinate parts, such as tracing, squaring, etc.' He paid a second visit to Brighton in July, and during his stay there made a number of fine sketches, although he disliked the place, because, to use his own words, 'the magnificence of the sea . . . is drowned in the tumult of stage-coaches, gigs, flys, etc., and the beach is only Piccadilly, or worse, by the seaside.' In his intervals of absence he kept a journal of his doings, which he sent in instalments to his wife. The playful tone of this record of small domestic occurrences conveys a delightful impression of the simplicity and cheerful affection that prevailed in his household. When in the following year they had been again to Brighton, on account of the delicacy of their eldest son, Mrs. Constable writes to her husband, who had returned to London, 'I have no treat like your journals and letters.' A pencil sketch in the British Museum shows that he paid a visit to Arundel in this year.

In addition to his anxiety about his son, in 1825, Constable was seriously worried by his picture of 'The Opening of Waterloo Bridge,' which, though it had been on his easel for several years, was still far from completion. The painting caused him at one moment to be full of hope, at the next

made him despair, and it was not till seven years later that he finally got it ready for exhibition. At the Academy he met with some success, for he sold his two smaller pictures, and had every reason to be proud of his larger work, 'The Leaping Horse,' though after the exhibition was over he improved it by moving a willow stump, which in the original design occupies a prominent place on the right-hand side of the composition.

By this alteration the effect of the picture is enormously improved, for nothing is left to distract the eye from the main motive of the work, the horse which rises so massively over the sky-line. The painting, too, is a masterpiece of cool colour, though in its present situation in the Diploma Gallery it is difficult to see it as a whole except in a very favourable light. In no single work are Constable's peculiar excellences combined and balanced more perfectly. It is as fresh in effect as almost any work that ever came from his hand, and yet it is nowhere raw or garish. As a design it is perhaps his grandest and most truly inventive creation on a large scale. Details are admirably suggested where needful, without being scamped, or, as is the case in some of his earlier works, realised too completely. The painting, too, hits just the happy mean between force and shapeliness. There is plenty of strong impasto, but the impasto has everywhere a definite relation to the definite form it suggests, and is no mere technical device for insuring brilliancy, nor is it so broken as to leave a general impression of spottiness and glittering disunion. By the side of most modern painting the picture, for this very reason, would look like an Old Master. Among Old Masters it assumes a brightness and freshness and freedom that make it seem modern. The picture, in fact, might well serve as a landmark between the art of the Past and the art of the Present, between the making of beautiful designs and the scientific imitation of natural light and colour. To the student of Constable's work 'The Leaping Horse' may serve to mark a similar dividing of the ways. Up to the year of its exhibition, 1825, he had painted with the brush, using the palette-knife only as an accessory. Later he began

all his pictures with the brush, but used the palette-knife so freely upon them afterwards that the brushwork in the end is often hardly visible, except in the deep shadows. By this practice he obtained enormous force and luminosity, but only by the sacrifice of suavity and repose. In 'The Leaping Horse' he attains all these qualities in such measure that one cannot help wishing at times that he had always painted so.





CHAPTER VI

CONSTABLE'S LIFE, 1826-1837

HOUGH the power and originality of Constable's art at its maturity was still far from receiving the general approbation it deserved, it is evident that he was not wholly neglected. Early in 1826 he heard that his 'White Horse,' then on exhibition at Lille, had repeated the triumph of his 'Haywain' in Paris, and

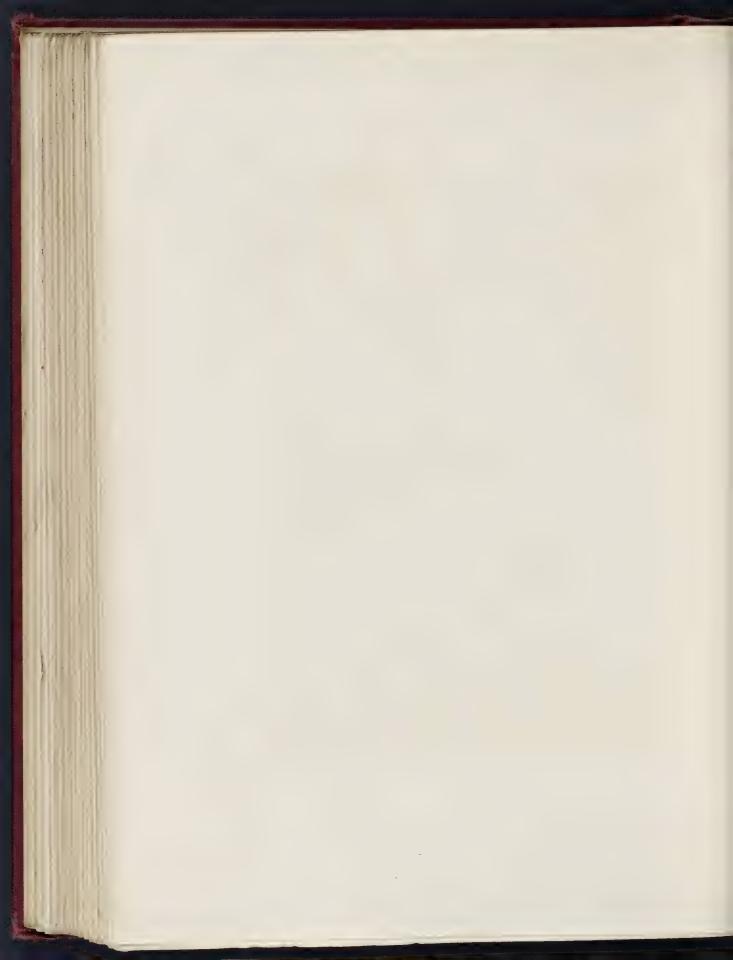
gained him a second gold medal. In his own country, if he received no such conspicuous honour, he was at least able to find a certain number of purchasers, for in one of his letters he mentions having about four hundred pounds' worth of commissions to execute, and thought it worth while to issue a circular giving the prices of his pictures. It ran as follows:—

STRATFORD MILL ON THE RIVER STOUR.

Exhibited 1820. From the Oil-Painting in the possession of Sir Samuel Montagu, Bart.







A Scale of Mr. Constable's Prices for Landscape.

Of the size of 1 ft. 6 in.					20	guineas.
From 1 ft. to 2 ft					40	23
,, 2 ft. to 2 ft. 6 in.		٠			50	11
,, 2 ft. 6 in. to 3 ft.					60	21
Half-length size, namely:-						
4 ft. 2 in. x 3 ft. 4 in.					120	22
In larger sizes the price	will	be regu	ılated	by ci	rcums	tances,

In larger sizes the price will be regulated by circumstances, depending on time and subject.

35 CHARLOTTE STREET, 1826.

An Associate of the Academy in these days, in the fulness of his powers, would laugh at such prices, but they are not so ridiculously small as they look. Constable's habit of constantly sketching from nature had made him a rapid executant, and the smaller paintings would not represent any great expenditure of time or trouble. Like Reynolds and other prolific painters, he was only obeying the natural law of supply and demand when he sold at reasonable prices pictures which, owing to his industry and skill, were in danger of accumulating on his hands. The social aspirations (and in consequence the expenses) of an A.R.A. in his time were far more modest than now, while the purchasing power of money was much greater. The prices on this list may be roughly estimated as being of at least double their present value.

For the moment all seemed to be well with him. His wife and family had been at Brighton for some time, but had come back to London early in the year. His younger brother Abram, to whom he was closely attached, had been severely ill, but had recovered. At the Academy, too, his 'Cornfield' had won universal approbation, and deservedly, for it is one of his most perfect works, though not one of his most ambitious ones. 'The Cornfield' has no fundamental idea so grand as that of 'The Leaping Horse,' or so audacious as that of the 'Salisbury from the Meadows.' It is a miracle rather of all-round completeness than of striking power and originality,

though there is originality and a great deal of quiet power in the massive group of elms that tower up so grandly against the sky on the left. The variety and resource of the technique can be best estimated by a comparison with the equally perfect but more limited 'Cottage in a Cornfield.' The National Gallery picture is in itself practically an epitome of Constable's practice at its very best, where every device of solid and transparent painting, of scumbling and glazing, of pats with a palette-knife, and delicate touches with a fine sable, are perfectly blended and harmonised. The earlier painting is by comparison a simple piece of work, dignified and noble of course, but without the subtlety and variety that can only be attained by a far more complex technical orchestration.

Later in the year Constable was at work on the popular 'Glebe Farm,' which he exhibited at the British Institution in 1827, with 'The Cornfield.' To the Academy he sent his large 'Marine Parade and Chain Pier, Brighton,' a 'Hampstead Heath,' now at South Kensington, and an oblong 'Gillingham Mill'—which must not be confused with the upright picture, also at Kensington, which Lucas engraved. While engaged on preparing those pictures (the two smaller ones had been practically finished some time before), Constable was endeavouring to find a permanent residence at Hampstead, and to let the upper part of 35 Charlotte Street. For Mrs. Constable and the children he rented, in the autumn of 1826, a small house on Downshire Hill, now rebuilt (No. 25), and here his third son, Alfred, was born.

A year later (August 1827) he had found what he wanted, and writes to Fisher:—

'We are at length fixed in our comfortable little house in Well Walk, Hampstead, and are once more enjoying our own furniture, and sleeping in our own beds. My plans in search of health for my family have been ruinous, but I hope now that our movable camp no longer exists, and that I am settled for life. So hateful is moving about to me that I could gladly exclaim, "Here let me take my everlasting rest." The words seem almost prophetic now when one remembers that the place of Constable's everlasting rest is

not half a mile away. The letter continues: 'The rent of this house is fifty-two pounds per annum, taxes twenty-five, and what I have spent on it ten or fifteen. I have let Charlotte Street at eighty-two pounds, retaining my two parlours, large front attic, painting-room, gallery, etc. This house is to my wife's heart's content; it is situated on an eminence at the back of the spot in which you saw us, and our little drawing-room commands a view unsurpassed in Europe—from Westminster Abbey to Gravesend. The dome of St. Paul's in the air seems to realise Michel Angelo's words on seeing the Pantheon: "I will build such a thing in the sky."

The view described so enthusiastically has long since been hidden by new erections, and Constable's little house, then No. 6 Well Walk, has itself vanished. It is said to have stood on the site of the house now numbered 40.

The letter just quoted proves that Constable's move to Hampstead was not determined so much by his desire to be nearer to the scenery which during the last three or four years had occupied much of his thoughts and of his canvas, but by the necessity of finding a house where the delicate constitutions of his wife and eldest son would not be tried by confinement and want of air.

For Mrs. Constable the change came too late. All her life she had been extremely susceptible to cold and damp, and the attacks of ill-health which had rendered visits to Brighton and elsewhere a necessity during the last few years, now developed into consumption. In the spring of 1828 she was at Putney, after the birth of her fourth son, Lionel, and for a time was too ill to be moved. In June she was taken to Brighton with her children, and seemed to be gaining ground. The whole family were back at Hampstead in August, and for a month or so the improvement continued. Then a relapse set in, she became rapidly worse, and died on November 23rd. To Constable's affectionate nature the shock was almost overwhelming; and he never really quite recovered from it. He wore mourning for the rest of his life, and this token of respect for his wife's memory was no empty one.

Though he had been married barely twelve years, he had known his wife for more than a quarter of a century, and she had stood by him during most of that time in all his anxieties and difficulties. With the loss of this beloved companion the note of nervousness and despondency which was heard so often in his youth and early manhood begins to sound once more in his correspondence, and never is quite absent from it even when the general tone of his thought is not melancholy. There can be little doubt, too, that this mental trouble, as is often the case with persons of a nervous temperament, reacted strongly upon Constable's physical constitution. During his wife's lifetime he was once or twice out of health, owing to want of exercise and overwork, but after her death he seems to have been in quite good health as rarely as he was quite happy. Mrs. Constable lies buried in Hampstead Churchyard in the vault where her husband and children were afterwards laid. On the tombstone her husband commemorated her loss by the inscription:—

Eheu, quam tenui a filo pendet Quidquid in vita maxime arridet.

Constable's large picture in this year's Academy, the upright 'Dedham Vale,' is chiefly remarkable as being almost identical in design with a little oil-sketch at South Kensington, dated 1802. No better proof could be adduced of the powerlessness of altered circumstances, and vastly increased technical powers, to tear him away from the impressions of his youth. His anxiety for the future of his family must also have been greatly reduced, though it does not seem to have been wholly removed, by the receipt of a legacy of about twenty thousand pounds from his father-in-law, Mr. Bicknell. 'I shall stand before a six-foot canvas with a mind at ease, thank God!' he writes to Fisher, after explaining his intention to settle the money on his wife and children.

His election to full membership of the Academy, although he was pleased at the attainment of such an honour, only seems to have accentuated his grief at his wife's loss. 'It has been delayed until I am solitary and cannot

HARWICH; SEA AND LIGHTHOUSE.

Exhibited 1820. From the Oil-Painting in the Tate Gallery, Millbank.







impart it,' he could not help saying. Indeed some feeling of resentment was not unnatural, for the originality, and to a considerable extent the power and beauty, of his art had long been recognised by some of his fellow-painters, although he was still practically unknown to the general public. This feeling he was not able to conceal entirely when, in accordance with custom, he called to pay his respects to the President. Lawrence, holding that historical art was in reality the one possible form of fine painting, considered a mere landscape painter like Constable exceedingly lucky to be elected, when several historical painters were competing for the honour. Constable seems to have recognised this, from the President's tone, and answered that he considered his election an act of justice rather than a favour. Nor was the feeling of resentment a momentary one, for two months later he writes to Leslie from Hampstead just before 'sending-in day':—

'Since I saw you I have been shut up here. I have forwarded my picture of 'Hadleigh Castle,' which I shall send to Charlotte Street to-morrow morning. Can you oblige me with a call to tell me whether I ought to send it to the exhibition? I am grievously nervous about it, as I am still smarting under my election. I have little enough either of prudence or self-knowledge, as you know, and I am willing to submit to what you and others whom I value may decide.'

The 'Hadleigh Castle,' which is now, I believe, somewhere in America, is most notable perhaps for the story Leslie tells about it.

'I witnessed an amusing scene before this picture at the Academy on one of the varnishing days. Chantrey told Constable its foreground was too cold, and, taking his palette from him, he passed a strong glazing of asphaltum all over that part of the picture, and while this was going on, Constable, who stood behind him, in some degree of alarm said to me, "There goes all my dew." He held in great respect Chantrey's judgment in most matters, but this did not prevent his carefully taking from the picture all that the great sculptor had done for it.'

The story is so well known as, perhaps, to be hardly worth the

97

re-telling, were it not for the fact that it seems to prove that Constable's palette, even at this period of his life, still contained asphaltum, that enticing, treacherous pigment, the use of which is in itself almost enough to prevent its user from ranking among modern painters. Constable, as we have seen, used it freely in the Nayland altarpiece of 1809, when he was a student of Reynolds, but that he should have continued to use it for twenty years afterwards, when his whole style of painting had outwardly undergone so great a revolution, shows how strong a hold the technical tradition of the past, even where it was defective, really had upon him.

He gave a further proof of his respect for the tradition of Reynolds in the spring of the following year, after the death of Sir Thomas Lawrence. When Lawrence's painting materials were sold, Constable bought a palette which had belonged to Sir Joshua Reynolds, and presented it to the Academy, with its history engraved upon a silver plate. His time was now largely taken up with the preparation of the early numbers of his 'English Landscape Scenery,' an undertaking which entailed endless correspondence with Lucas, and endless consultations as to choice of subjects and revision of details. Besides, as a newly elected Academician, he had to serve on the Hanging Committee of the 1830 Exhibition, a duty which made considerable demands on his temper and tact. Leslie in his Autobiography relates how he and Constable once had to go down to the hall of the Royal Academy to pacify an angry painter who was dissatisfied with the treatment his picture had received from the Hanging Committee. 'He accused some of the members of jealousy, and said, "I cannot but feel as I do, for painting is a passion with me." "Yes," said Constable, "and a bad passion."

In the spring of 1831 he was Visitor in the Life Academy, where, considering how far his own ideals in art were removed from those of the historical painters of the time, he seems to have performed his duties with no little tact and originality. Each model he set was placed in the attitude of some well-known figure by an Old Master. He began with an 'Eve' after Raphael, and continued with two male figures from 'The Last Judg-

ment' of Michelangelo. His innovation consisted in providing each figure with a background, so that it might not be studied as an isolated thing. 'I set my first figure yesterday,' he writes, 'and it is much liked. Etty congratulates me upon it; do, dear Leslie, come and see it. I have dressed up a bower of laurel, and I told the students they probably expected a landscape background from me. I am quite popular in the Life; at all events I spare neither pains nor expense to become a good Academician. My "Garden of Eden" cost me ten shillings, and my men were twice stopped coming from Hampstead with the green boughs by the police, who thought (as was the case) they had robbed some gentleman's grounds. The fun is, my garden at the Academy was taken for a Christmas decoration, holly and mistletoe.'

Among his pupils in the Life School was Daniel Maclise, who gives the following account of Constable's teaching there:—

'I cannot call to mind the substance of any particular address of Constable when he was Visitor, but I recollect that he constantly addressed us collectively; or rather, whatever observation he had to make, he made aloud; and this was very frequent. Every evening he said something, generally relating to the model he had set, and in favour of certain picturesque accompaniments which he thought might always be introduced with propriety; he was with the students a most popular visitor.'

While dealing with Constable's work in the Life School, it may not be out of place to mention that he was the last Visitor who performed his duties at Somerset House. When in the spring of 1837, just before his death, he took leave of the students, he delivered a short address to them, pointing out that they would be wise to pursue their studies where there was the best living school of artists, and not where the number of old pictures was greatest. He spoke with especial reference to schools of art in France, combating the notion that their ideal of mathematical accuracy in drawing was the perfect one, and quoting in support of his opinion some words of Stothard: 'In the slightest pen-and-ink sketches of Raphael, however irregular the proportions, you have the real principle of good drawing—his figures live and

move.' That this was the essence of his own practice, and one of the marked innovations which he introduced into landscape painting, has been indicated elsewhere.

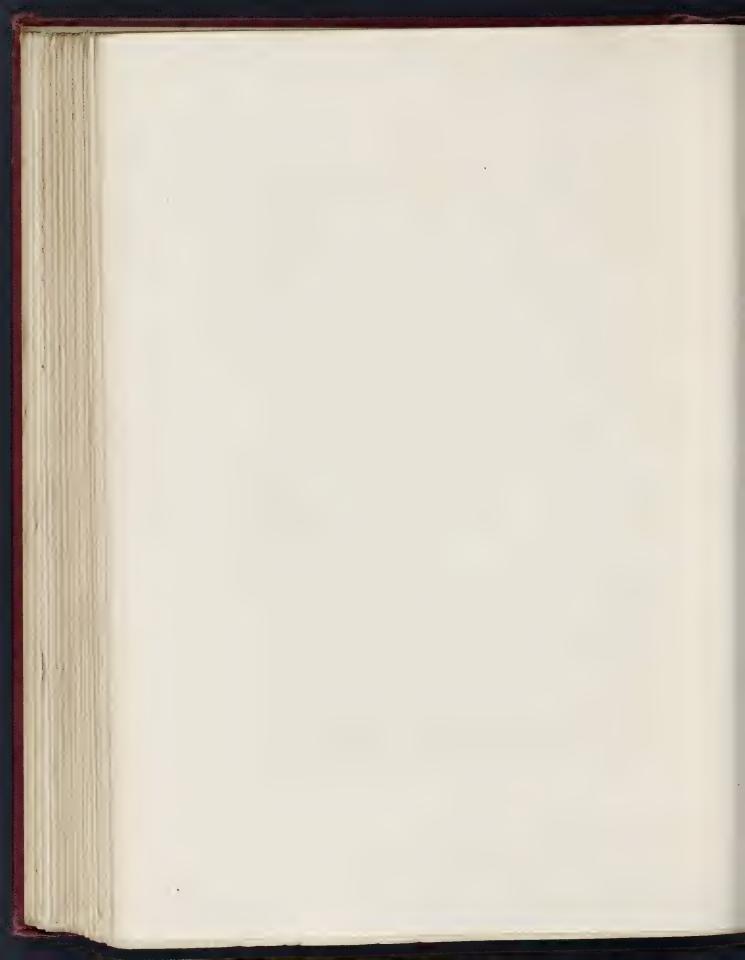
His principal Academy picture of 1830, 'A Dell in Helmingham Park,' was merely the working out on a large scale of a design made some twenty years before, and the picture itself in consequence, though forcibly handled, has a certain richness and sobriety of effect which is lacking in most of Constable's later works. In the spring of 1831 he was again ill-suffering much from the cold and the east winds, and much depressed about the commercial failure of the 'English Landscape Scenery.' 'Beechey,' he writes to Lucas, 'was here yesterday, and said, "Why, d-n it, Constable, what a d-d fine picture you are making; but you look d-d ill, and have got a d-d bad cold!" So that you have evidence on oath of my being about a fine picture, and that I am looking ill.' The d-d fine picture deserved its forcible description, for it was the famous 'Salisbury from the Meadows,' generally known from the great Lucas mezzotint as 'The Rainbow.' After Constable's death it was suggested by his friend Mr. William Purton that this magnificent picture should be purchased by a committee of his friends and presented to the nation. The suggestion, however, was not carried out. The majority of Constable's friends thought that the boldness of its execution would make it less popular with the public than 'The Cornfield,' and the latter picture was accordingly chosen instead.

In the autumn of this year Constable was again unwell, suffering much from acute rheumatism, which he did not get rid of until the following spring. His physical pain was aggravated by severe nervous depression. The agitation about the Reform Bill was then at its height, and to Constable's anxious mind, exaggerating each symptom of unrest, there seemed to be every chance of a catastrophe which would shake the foundations of our national credit, and so deprive his children of the investments he had made for their benefit. His chief comfort during his illness was the companionship of his eldest daughter Maria, whom he describes thus: 'She is so orderly in

WATER MEADOWS NEAR SALISBURY.

About 1820. From the Oil-Painting at South Kensington.





all her plans and so full of method—so ladylike by nature, and so firm and yet so gentle, that you cannot believe the influence this heavenly little monitor has on the whole house, but most of all on me, who watch all her dear ways with mingled smiles and tears.' In the summer of 1832 even this source of consolation seemed likely to be taken away. Maria Constable was seized with a serious attack of scarlet fever, and was in a very critical condition for several days. The year 1832, indeed, was far from being one of the happiest years of Constable's life. In addition to this anxiety about the health of his favourite daughter, he sent to the Academy the picture which had given him more trouble than any of his other works—for it had been in hand nearly fifteen years, and was not quite to his mind even at the last—and also lost two of his oldest and dearest friends.

'The Opening of Waterloo Bridge,' though it was not a popular picture at the Academy, is one of Constable's most powerful productions, in spite of the fact that the subject was in reality alien to his temper and taste. It is said that after Constable's death the brightness of the work was ruined by a picture-dealer, who 'toned' it with a wash of blacking fixed with varnish. This damage, if ever it were done, must have been well repaired, for the impression the picture now leaves is one of extraordinary force and splendour, though the ultra-modern masses of loaded pigment in the foreground, obtained by a very free use of the palette-knife, give it a roughness and looseness that would be obtrusive in any ordinary room. In the Academy it was hung next to a grey sea-piece by Turner, and Leslie in his Autobiography tells how on Varnishing Day Turner watched Constable brightening up his picture still further by touches of lake and vermilion. He then went off, came back with his palette, and, without saying a word, put a round touch of red lead on his own grey sea, which made all Constable's colour look weak. 'I,' says the narrator, 'came into the room just as Turner left it. "He has been here," said Constable, "and fired a gun." On the opposite wall was a picture by Jones of "The Children in the Fiery Furnace." "A coal," said Cooper, "has bounced across the room from Jones's picture, and set fire to Turner's

sea." The great man did not come into the room again for a day and a half, and then, in the last moments allowed for painting, he glazed the scarlet seal on his picture and shaped it into a buoy.'

Before the close of the exhibition, Constable had to prepare himself for another blow. 'Poor John Dunthorne,' he writes, 'is very much worse; he had several doctors with him yesterday, who have relieved him a little, but this state of things cannot last long. It makes me sadly melancholy. I shall lose a sincere friend, whose attachment to me has been like that of a son from his infancy. He is without fault, and so much the fitter for Heaven. I wake in the night about him. . . .' While he was thus grieving at the prospect of losing this young man, to whom he was deeply attached both for his father's sake and for his own, he had to endure a still heavier shock, the sudden death of his dearest and most intimate friend, Archdeacon Fisher. The archdeacon had been ill for some time, and had gone with his wife to Boulogne for a change. The visit at first seemed to do him good, but a relapse occurred, and he died suddenly on August 25.

The loss to Constable was second only to that of his wife. Fisher had been his earliest patron and his constant supporter, as well as a manly and sympathetic adviser in times of trouble. In him an intelligent and enthusiastic love of art was united to much kindly common sense, much healthy activity of mind, and a strong vein of humour. The path of life had been always made fairly smooth for him—at first by the patronage of his uncle, Bishop Fisher, afterwards by his own good qualities, which made him a favourite with Bishop Burgess. 'I live,' he says in one of his letters, 'with the new bishop as son with father, or brother with brother. Our habits of life similar, our pursuits similar, or only sufficiently different to increase the pleasure of communication.' Fisher was thus left free all his life to follow his own inclinations, to accumulate a large and varied store of knowledge by continuous if desultory reading, to think much on art, to practise it a little, and to indulge his tastes as a fisherman. 'I had nearly forgotten to tell you,' he writes to Constable on one occasion, that I was the other day

fishing in the New Forest, in a fine, deep, broad river, with mills, roaring backwaters, rushy beds, etc. I thought often of you during the day. I caught two pike, was up to the middle in watery meadows, ate my dinner under a willow, and was as happy as when I was "a careless boy."' Of his humanity and forbearance in the performance of his clerical duties his letters afford ample evidence; for he was too wide-minded a man to stickle over unessential details. 'What a mistake,' he says, 'our Oxford and Cambridge apostolic missionaries fall into when they make Christianity a stern, haughty thing. Think of St. Paul with a full-blown wig, deep shovel hat, apron, round belly, double chin, deep cough, stern eye, rough voice, and imperious manner, drinking port wine, and laying down the law as to the best way of escaping the operation of the Curates' Residence Act.' Fisher's parsonage at Osmington, his purse, and his untiring friendship, had always been at Constable's service, so that by his death the painter suffered a loss that was irreparable. Poor young Dunthorne died at Bergholt about three months later.

In 1833 Constable made his first appearance as a lecturer, delivering in June a discourse on the history of landscape painting to the members of the Literary and Scientific Society of Hampstead, in the Hampstead Assembly Rooms. He gave another lecture on the same subject at Worcester in 1835, and in 1836, during the months of May and June, lectured four times at the Royal Institution. Finally, in July of the same year, he spoke once more before the Literary and Scientific Society of Hampstead. Though in one or two instances memorands relating to these lectures have been found among Constable's papers, and fairly complete notes of them were taken by some of his friends, none of them appear to have been actually written out in full. In delivering them Constable seems to have relied entirely upon his own stores of knowledge, assisted by copies and engravings of the pictures mentioned, and by chronological lists of the artists with whom he was dealing.

The substance of these lectures is so intimately connected with Constable's

personal views upon art, that the principal points he insisted on have been dealt with in the chapter in this book devoted to that subject, and there is therefore no necessity for repeating them here. It will be enough to say that throughout the discourses Constable insists on the fact that all great land-scape painting has been done by men who sought their inspiration in nature and not in the work of other artists. Thus while he can hardly find words to express his admiration for Titian and for Claude, for Rembrandt and for Rubens, he, to use his own phrase, 'hopes to murder Both and Berghem.' Nevertheless, while insisting on the fact that abject imitation of others is the death of all true and vital impulse in art, almost every word he speaks shows that he fully recognised the value of the closest possible study of the painting of the past, since there lay the source of a sound technical tradition, without which it was practically impossible to construct a complete work of art.

Such fragments as we have of the lectures show that Constable possessed a literary taste of no mean order. The quotations he introduces are almost without exception nearly perfect examples of style, and his own words as noted elsewhere display a remarkable sense of rhythm and of that power of exactly adapting expression to subject-matter which is characteristic of all good writers. Of his manner of dealing with serious subjects I have given instances elsewhere—his description of the landscape of Boucher will serve as an example of the way in which he could handle more frivolous matters:—

'From cottages adorned with festoons of ivy, sparrow-pots, etc., are seen issuing opera dancers with mops, brooms, milk-pails, and guitars; children with cocked hats, queues, bagwigs, and swords, and cats, poultry, and pigs. The scenery is diversified with winding streams, broken bridges, and water-wheels; hedge-stakes dancing minuets, and groves bowing and curtsying to each other, the whole leaving the mind in a state of bewilderment and confusion, from which laughter alone can relieve it.'

Of Constable's delivery of his lectures we are told, 'Many of his happiest turns of expression were not to be found in his own notes; they arose at

THE HAYWAIN (SKETCH).

Exhibited 1821. From the Oil-Painting at South Kensington.







the moment, and were not to be recalled by a reporter unskilled in short-hand; neither can the charm of a most agreeable voice (though pitched somewhat too low), the beautiful manner in which he read the quotations, whether of prose or poetry, or the play of his very expressive countenance, be conveyed to the reader by words.'

Constable's chief picture at the Academy this year was 'Englefield House, Berkshire,' a commission from the owner of the house, Mr. Benyon de Beauvoir. An acquaintance remarked to the artist that it was only a picture of a house, and ought to have been put into the Architectural Room; whereupon he answered that it was a 'picture of a summer morning including a house.' A similar story is told of Mr. Salting's 'Malvern Hall,' and with more fitness, as the sky of the 'Englefield House' is dark and threatening. In the autumn he paid a visit, with his sons John and Charles, to Mr. George Constable of Arundel, a namesake, but no relation. He seems to have acted as art adviser to this new friend, occasionally buying for him such sound examples of the Old Masters as he came across. In one of his letters he mentions casually that he had sold his own collection of pictures, as he found his house too much encumbered with lumber. Just before, Mr. George Constable had asked him about the price of a picture of 'Salisbury.' Constable hesitated about selling it, saying, 'I am unwilling to part with any of my standard pictures; they being all points with me in my practice, and will much regulate my future productions, should I do any more large works.' This refusal shows that too much importance should not be attached to his complaints about the loss on his 'English Landscape Scenery.' He says of it, for instance, 'The extravagant, useless, and silly expenditure I have been led into distracts me, now that the hour of reflection is come," and yet he could afford to refuse to sell his pictures.

Towards the end of the year Constable became unwell, and his ill-health developed in the spring of 1834 into a serious attack of rheumatism, which left its mark upon him for the rest of his life, and, according to his medical adviser, had some share in hastening his end. Its immediate effect was to

prevent him exhibiting anything but water-colours at the Academy. In July he was once more the guest of Mr. George Constable at Arundel, and while there paid a visit to Petworth. Constable had a letter of introduction to Lord Egremont, who received him very kindly, and pressed him to come and stay with him. In September, accordingly, Constable went down to Petworth, and by Lord Egremont's forethought was driven about every day to see as much of the neighbourhood as was possible. So many of the sketches made on this visit are now the property of the nation, that it is almost possible to trace the course and order of his excursions in that magnificent country.

On his return to London he set to work retouching his great 'Salisbury from the Meadows,' but was so much depressed and worried, that we find him writing, 'Every gleam of sunshine is withdrawn from me, in the art at least. Can it be wondered at, then, that I paint continual storms?

"Tempest o'er tempest roll'd."

Still the darkness is majestic, and I have not to accuse myself of ever having prostituted the moral feeling of the art. . . .'

In March 1835 he was preparing 'The Valley Farm' for the Academy when Mr. Vernon called. Seeing the picture on the easel he asked Constable whether it was painted for any particular person. The artist answered, 'Yes, sir, it is painted for a very particular person—the person for whom I have all my life painted.' Mr. Vernon bought the picture on the spot, and paid him for it during the summer, although the work was not delivered even by the end of October, for on the 29th Constable writes to Chalon, 'I have been very busy with Mr. Vernon's picture. Oiling out, making out, polishing, scraping, etc., seem to have agreed with it exceedingly. The "sleet" and "snow" have disappeared, leaving in their places silver, ivory, and a little gold; . . . it will go in a few days.' Could the most devout follower of the Old Masters wish for any more delicate and exact expression of the qualities desirable in light pigments than that trinity of silver, ivory, and a little gold?

Even by January 1836 the picture was not delivered, and then Mr. Vernon allowed Constable to send it to the British Gallery. For the Academy he had been preparing his large picture of 'Arundel Mill and Castle,' but was unable to finish it in time, and so was represented by 'The Cenotaph,' sketched in the grounds at Cole-Orton thirteen years earlier, and by the fine water-colour of 'Stonehenge' now at Kensington. After the opening of the Academy, he delivered his four lectures on landscape painting at the British Institution, and for the remainder of the year seems to have remained at home, with the exception of a single visit to Suffolk. His eldest son, John, was now at Cambridge, while Charles had been at sea for more than a year.

On December 30 he wrote asking Leslie and his wife to dinner, using the words 'Prithee come, "life is short, friendship is sweet"; these words were the last words of poor Fisher to me in his last invitation. My month in the Life School is March.' He then goes on to describe his intention of thoroughly 'sifting to the bottom' the composition of Titian's 'Peter Martyr.' Of this note Leslie says, 'The invitation contained in this letter was Constable's last written one to me. Without attaching to coincidences such as these any superstitious importance, they are too affecting to pass unnoticed. The expression, also, which follows with regard to March, which proved to be the last month of his life, is very remarkable.'

Constable was at this time hard at work upon his picture of 'Arundel Mill and Castle,' which he had sketched about eighteen months before, when staying at Arundel with Mr. George Constable. He also kept up a constant correspondence with Lucas, who was engraving the 'Salisbury from the Meadows' upon a large scale. Constable was delighted with the plate, and in his anxiety to get a perfect result altered the details again and again. At times he seems to have grown impatient with the laborious nature of mezzotint, for in January 1837 he says to Lucas, 'How I wish I could scratch and tear away with your tools on the steel, just as old — (a cantankerous Suffolk farmer) wanted to fly up to Langham Hill,

and tear the trees and hedges all up by the roots; but I can't do it, and your way is, I well know, the best and only way.' Later he becomes enthusiastic: 'The print is a noble and beautiful thing, entirely improved and entirely made perfect: the bow is noble, and is now a neck-or-nothing business—it is startling and unique.' He then proceeds in high good-humour to chaff Lucas about his printer, 'your clever and agreeable ruffian, who is given to break out of a Saturday night, but it does not last long, and generally goes off on a Sunday morning.'

Nevertheless, the atmospheric influences to which Constable was particularly subject in the early part of the year seem to have caused him some inconvenience, especially since he had to be at Somerset House every evening from five to nine, as Visitor in the Life School. On Thursday, March 30, when his duties were almost at an end, he attended a General Assembly of the Academy. As the night, though cold, was fine, he walked home to Charlotte Street, with Leslie, who relates that in Oxford Street Constable heard a little girl crying because she had hurt her knee. Crossing over the road, he gave her a shilling and some kind words. He parted from Leslie in good spirits, and during all the next day worked at his 'Arundel Mill and Castle.' In the evening he walked out for a short time, on a charitable errand connected with the Artists' Benevolent Fund. After supper he went to bed, but woke about eleven in violent pain; a doctor was sent for, but in the meanwhile Constable had fainted, and died before a stimulant could be given, within half an hour of the first attack. At the post morten examination no cause of illness could be discovered except indigestion, and it was thought that the prompt use of a stimulant might have saved his life. He was buried at Hampstead, in the vault containing the remains of his wife, where most of his children were afterwards laid.

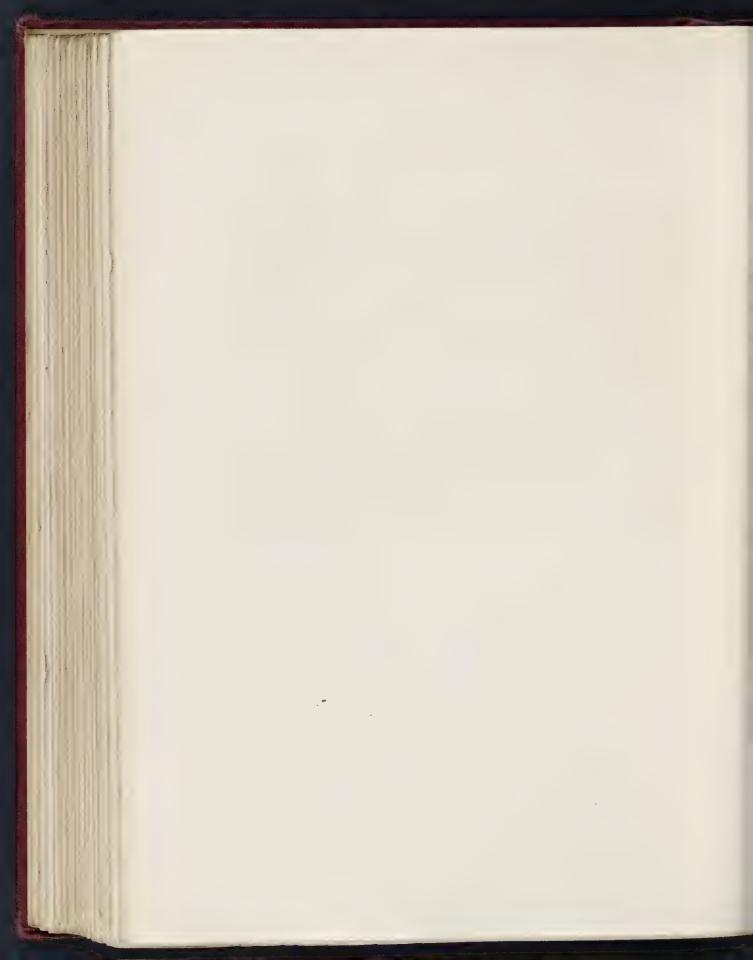
Constable's fondness for children was remarkable, and to the society of his own sons and daughters he constantly turned for relief from the despondency to which, during the last years of his life, he was so often a victim. In his letters the sayings and doings of these young people occupy a far

OLD HOUSES AT HARNHAM BRIDGE, SALISBURY.

Nevember 1821. From the Water-Colour Drawing at South Kensington,







larger space than can be accorded to them in a work which deals almost entirely with his painting. Nevertheless, a few notes about them may not be out of place.

John Charles Constable, the eldest son, was born at Keppel Street in 1817. He was a very delicate child, and was educated first at home, and afterwards was at school at Folkestone. While there in 1833 he had a fall, when walking in his sleep, which was followed by erysipelas and rheumatic fever. This delicacy continued, though for a time it had no marked ill effects. He was present at his father's death, and was so upset by the shock, that he was unable to be present at the funeral. At this time he was uncertain whether he should enter the medical profession or should take orders. Ultimately he decided in favour of the latter course, but while combining the study of medicine with his theological work at Jesus College, Cambridge, he caught scarlet fever, and died there in 1841.

Maria Louisa (Minna) Constable was born in 1819, and was educated at home by the family governess, Miss Noble. As has been mentioned, she was a great favourite with her father, and a great consolation to him at the time of her mother's death. When ten years old Archdeacon Fisher describes her thus: 'Minny is the nicest child in the house possible. Nobody would know of her existence if she were not seen. She improves in French and music (her ear is perfect), and she dances quadrilles with the chairs like a parched pea on a drum head.' Miss Constable died in 1883.

Charles Golding Constable, the artist's second son, was born in 1821. He was educated first at home, and afterwards went to school at Folkestone with his elder brother for a short time. His father wished him to become an artist, as he possessed much natural talent, but his own wish to be a sailor prevailed, and at the age of fourteen he made his first voyage, visiting the East Indies in the *Buckinghamshire*. He entered the East India Company's service, and for many years was in command of a brig engaged on surveying the Persian Gulf. He retired from the service with the rank of Commander when the Company's affairs were taken over by the British

Government. Captain Constable had a good knowledge of painting, and it is said that his works are often mistaken for those of his father.

Isabel Constable, the artist's fourth child, was born in 1823, and survived all her brothers and sisters. At her death in 1888 she bequeathed more than 400 of her father's paintings and studies to South Kensington Museum, and several important pictures to the National Gallery, 'The Cenotaph,' 'The Glebe Farm,' and 'Flatford Mill' being among them, as the joint gift of herself, her sister Maria, and her brother Lionel. Miss Isabel Constable was a member of the Society of Lady Artists, and exhibited flower pieces at the Royal Academy in 1851 and 1852.

Emily Constable, the artist's third daughter, did not long survive her father, dying in 1839 at the age of fourteen.

Alfred Abram Constable, the third son, was born in 1826, and as a boy was taught with his brother Lionel by Mr. Bonner, the tutor who lived with the family at Charlotte Street for several years. Alfred Constable, like his brother Charles, inherited a good deal of his father's artistic skill and some of his enthusiasm for art, but was drowned in his twenty-eighth year by the upsetting of a boat in which he and his younger brother were crossing the Thames at Goring, on a cold November night. During the last six years of his life (1847-1853) he exhibited eight landscapes at the Royal Academy.

Lionel Bicknell Constable was two years younger than his brother Alfred, and lived till 1887. He also inherited much of his father's artistic instinct, and exhibited no less than thirteen landscapes at the Royal Academy between the years 1849 and 1855.

Though a very fair idea of Constable's character and talent can be gathered from his letters, it is rather more difficult to form quite an adequate idea of his personal appearance. His drawing of himself in the National Portrait Gallery reveals only a solemn, red-faced rustic. The oil-painting by Daniel Gardner at South Kensington, though by no means an inspired production, has all the air of a good likeness, and shows us fairly well what

Constable was like at the age of twenty, an honest, affectionate, thoughtful, firm, sensitive fellow, whose character is as yet but half developed. The oil-painting by Leslie, done many years later, and engraved by Lucas, is obviously meant to be flattering, and all traces of the man's strength of mind are hidden under the simpering mask of a well-meaning idealist. The pencil-drawing by Maclise shows a kindly, thoughtful face, steady rather than determined; it represents, in fact, the man who might have painted 'The Cottage in the Cornfield,' but who could never have conceived, much less dared to execute, 'The Leaping Horse' or the 'Salisbury from the Meadows.' The right hand, however, is most carefully drawn, and shows clearly the broad 'miller's thumb, of which the painter was proud.

The one portrait in which the other side of the man's spirit appears is the anonymous pencil-sketch in the British Museum, so faint as to be at first hardly visible, and damaged by a fold which passes right across the eye. Here the face is set and almost stern with concentrated thought. The head is that of a magnanimous, charitable man, whose lot is continuous intellectual effort, which can only be sustained by a heavy drain upon the vital forces; whose reasoning and perceptive faculties have to be kept to their work by continuous exertion of the will; whose life is one long battle with difficulty, which has strained the nerves without altering or lessening the determination. This drawing, in fact, seems to have caught Constable toiling at his easel, as he did year after year, upon work which he knew to be good, and yet certain to bring him during his lifetime neither success with the public nor reputation with his fellows.

How partial this recognition was even in his last years is proved by the failure of the sale of his pictures at Messrs. Foster's in 1838. The priced catalogue printed in the Appendix will show how quite important paintings were bought in by his family for a few pounds, although his 'Arundel Mill and Castle' had been shown at the Academy immediately after his death, and 'The Cornfield' had been purchased by a committee of his friends, and presented to the nation. It is almost tragic to think of the enormous value

of that Collection now, and to look at the miserable prices then realised, even after the artist's death, when dealers could be sure that there was no danger of their market being overstocked, and the public had been stirred up to a momentary interest by the passing away of a figure whose achievement they had so long been accustomed to criticise. Neglect, discouragement, and abuse are successively the inheritance of almost all original artists who have no Ruskin to preach their excellence, or no Philip IV. to employ them, but even the ignorance of the public is usually conquered by the time an artist has ceased to do his best work. Constable was more unfortunate in being so original that his countrymen were unable to appreciate his genius till he had been in his grave for half a century.



THE SALT-BOX, HAMPSTEAD HEATH.

About 1821. From the Oil-Painting in the Tate Gallery, Millbank.









CHAPTER VII

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONSTABLE'S ART

N dealing with Constable's personal history it was impossible not to deal also, to some extent, with the evolution of his painting, so intimately are the two connected. Nevertheless, it is necessary, if we are to appreciate rightly the nature and value of Constable's achievement, to consider, even at the risk of some

repetition, the development of his art by itself in detail. This can only be done properly by a careful study of his pictures in relation to each other—a study in which I hope the Chronological List of his works appended to this volume may be of some use. The list is a mere skeleton (and far from a perfect one), being no more than a summary of my own notes on the pictures and sketches of Constable which I have examined during the last few years; yet, since Constable's works vary so vastly in style, it seemed better to print these random memoranda

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONSTABLE'S ART

about their probable chronology than to trust to mere generalities or descriptions.

The meagre remnants of Constable's earliest attempts at painting and drawing seem at first sight to convey no very definite impression as to the influences under which they originated. We know from his own words that his affection for the scenery of his boyhood made him determine to be a painter, yet up to the year 1801, when he was twenty-six years old, it is difficult to trace any clear purpose in Constable's studies. A small sketchbook containing quite childish drawings of Flatford Mill and the meadows round it, with a laboured water-colour and clumsy oil-painting of East Bergholt Church, made about 1798, are in their several ways original; but these are exceptions to the general rule. The other pictures and sketches of his early youth are either copies or feeble imitations of other masters, of Claude, of Waterloo, or of Gainsborough. Several most interesting works dating from this period of his life were exhibited with the remainder of Captain Constable's Collection by Messrs. Leggatt of Cornhill in 1899. I regret I have been unable to obtain the names of their present owners, and so have to write of them from memory. It has already been mentioned that in 1799, when Constable first settled as an art student in London, he mentions copying a number of Old Masters 'to acquire execution.' In that statement the explanation of all his early paintings may be found.

His admiration for the beauty of his native place started with his child-hood, and never faltered; but at first he had not the remotest idea as to how he could give it expression. The aim of his predecessors was so unlike his own that their works, with their arbitrary treatment of natural lighting, natural forms, and natural colour, could not immediately suggest any means of reaching his ideal, while the technical knowledge of his friend Dunthorne was too limited to be of much practical use. However, by the time that he became a student at the Royal Academy, Constable seems to have recognised that, although the art of Italy, of the Netherlands, and of his own countrymen, Girtin and Gainsborough, did not in the least resemble the Dedham Valley,

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONSTABLE'S ART

and could not teach him the secret of imitating the fields and trees and sky that he loved, yet it could teach him how to use paints and brushes, and how to construct a picture. Everything else he would have to learn for himself in the presence of nature.

These ideas he consistently put into practice, working like an Old Master while in London, but painting in the open air whenever he was able to take a holiday in Suffolk. Year after year he carried on these two methods of study side by side till at last he became practically master of them both. This alternation between tradition and nature, while it makes the study of Constable's early work exceedingly interesting, makes it also correspondingly difficult—the more so because he did not always or usually date his sketches. In 1801, for instance, he seems when in London to have been imitating Gainsborough. When he went away to Derbyshire he made sketches in pencil and Indian ink that recall Girtin and sometimes Claude; yet at the same time he did a few small studies in oil that are not like Claude, or Girtin, or Gainsborough, or any Old Master, but are quite bright, natural, and modernlooking. Again in 1802 we find him drawing Windsor and Eton in the manner of Girtin, making an oil study somewhat in the manner of Wilson (South Kensington, No. 587), and then doing the little upright sketch of 'Dedham Vale,' which was fresh enough to be developed twenty-six years later, with no radical change, into his large Academy picture of the subject.

Constable, in fact, though he continued to work for many years in the manner of the Old Masters, became a realist the moment he had learned to use paints and brushes with any degree of certainty. During those years his experiments in realism were confined to the simplest possible subjects. If judged on their own merits they could, with all their freshness and sincerity, only be regarded as art of a humble order, showing on the surface but little prospect of any startling development in the future. Mere realism, indeed, when it deals with ordinary objects, can convey to us little more than the very modest pleasure that the sight of the objects themselves would arouse. To effect more, realism must deal with matter that is itself both pregnant with

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONSTABLE'S ART

interest and remarkable in pictorial quality: that is to say, it has to undertake a task which was no easy matter even for the Old Masters, who could sacrifice anything they pleased in order to carry out their purpose. The realist has to execute the same task while burdened with a load of troublesome facts and details which may not be cast aside. A great realistic picture, in fact, must not only suggest vividly the essential facts of natural tone, colour, and illumination, but must also be animated by the strong emotional or æsthetic impulse, and constructed with the harmony and design which, when combined, are the indispensable foundation of all noble art.

Constable, as a young man, soon recognised that he did not know how to lay that foundation. He could not then paint a fine picture of any sort, and it says much for his insight and strength of purpose that, in order to gain the knowledge which would enable him to form a style of his own, he should have continued working in the style of the Old Masters till he was almost forty.

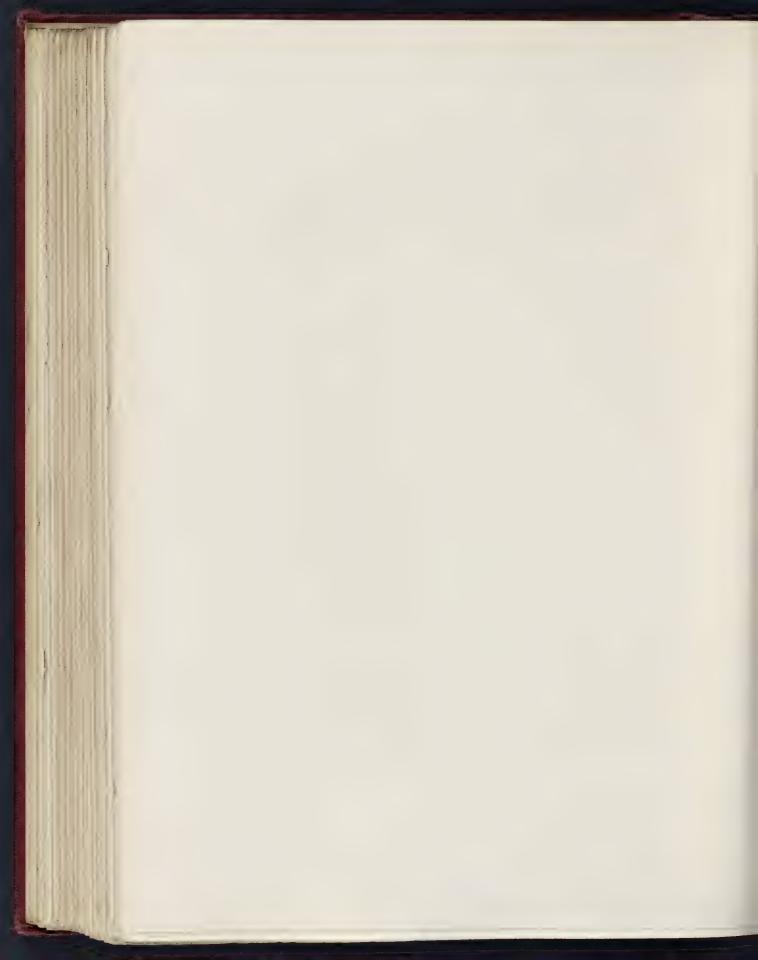
The essential difference between his point of view and that of his predecessors may be described as the substitution of love of the actual thing represented for love of its pictorial symbol. When Rubens painted a tree he was content if he could suggest the main facts of its mass and fibrous growth by a few summary masterful sweeps of his brush. The result would be sufficiently like a tree to be immediately recognised as such by the general public, while the trained eye would also note that it was superbly painted, and that it fitted perfectly into the picture scheme. Specific form and specific colour Rubens was content to sacrifice as unessential details which, if insisted upon unduly, would interfere with the lightness of handling and harmonious splendour which were his artistic ideals. Constable loved his trees too well to deal with them so wantonly. He could not forget their specific natures and the tones of colour peculiar to each of them, although experience proved to him that he would have to sacrifice some breadth or splendour or unity of pictorial effect to keep his trees as he saw them. In his sketches and studies from nature he learned to make that sacrifice almost from the first. In larger works,

YARMOUTH JETTY.

1822 From the Oil-Painting in the possession of Sir Charles Tennant, Bart.







to the very end of his life, he could not quite force himself to go so far, and took refuge in an all-round compromise with traditional methods of work which, compromise though it be, made on the whole more satisfactory pictures of green fields, and trees, and glittering sunlight than any subsequent device has done.

Between 1801 and 1806 the prevailing influences on Constable's land-scapes are Ruysdael, Gainsborough, and Girtin. His Brantham altarpiece of 1804, the one important experiment in figure painting which he made during these years, is obviously founded upon the practice of Benjamin West, who had been such a good friend to him. The 'Barnes Common' in the National Gallery shows how well he had assimilated the technique of the landscape painters of Holland. Gainsborough's lightness of hand he was never able to match; but with Girtin, as I have already indicated, he was much more successful. In 1806 Girtin's influence becomes for a time paramount, though Constable made a few studies in oil directly from nature when in the Lake District, which show no trace of anything but a desire for absolute truth, without much regard for pictorial quality, and still less for style or definite design. He could have chosen no better model than this great water-colour painter, for Girtin's breadth and simplicity were just the qualities which Constable's work from nature lacked most.

During 1807 and the next few years Constable spent a large portion of his time in painting portraits and in copying those by other masters, among them a number of works by Reynolds belonging to Lord Dysart. The portraits of Mr. Charles Lloyd of Birmingham and of his wife and child give us the means of estimating his powers as a portrait painter at the beginning of this period. They certainly mark an advance on the Brantham altarpiece of 1804, but are still amateurish and uncertain in drawing and execution. The background of the portrait of Mrs. Lloyd is hatched in the manner of Gainsborough, but less delicately, and the face of the baby is modelled in transparent colour, in a way which recalls that master's method, though the inaccuracy of the draughtsmanship has led to rather a quaint result. Two or three years of copying, however,

made a vast difference in Constable's powers as a portrait and figure painter. The Nayland altarpiece of 1809 already described is thoroughly well done, while the 'Study of a Girl's Head' at South Kensington, probably made about 1810, is so broad, simple, and luminous, that it might almost have come from the hand of Manet.

Other specimens of his portrait painting which I have seen are not so fortunate or so free. Probably the desire or the necessity of pleasing his sitters embarrassed him, leading him to aim at a conventional surface finish which was alien to his real tastes. Nevertheless, the time Constable spent in painting and copying portraits was not ill spent, for it kept him in contact with the one branch of art which was preserving a sound and definite technical tradition, at the very time when his own technical practice stood most in need of assistance.

The effect of these labours was soon evident in his landscape work. In 1806 he had been unable to utilise his sketches in the Lake District, largely because he did not know how to construct pictures from them. Mr. Lionel Phillips's 'Mountain Scene,' though pleasantly fresh in tone and well arranged so far as its lines and masses go, is still not quite coherent in general effect. It is based on a monochrome foundation, and yet the local colours do not fuse well with each other. By 1809, however, he had learned enough to be able to produce Mr. G. A. Phillips's exquisite picture of 'Dawn,' an almost perfect exercise in the manner of the Old Masters, and to paint a little later the 'Church Porch' now at Millbank, and Mr. Orrock's solemn view of Golding Constable's house, in which a distinct feeling for local colour begins to show itself.

In these experiments Constable was feeling his way towards blending the bright tones of his open air sketches with the unity of effect that all good pictures must have. The plan he adopted was merely a modification of the principle of the Old Masters, who obtained unity by basing all their picture schemes on a sound foundation of chiaroscuro, worked out first in monochrome and then modified by glazes, scumbles, and thin paintings

of local colour. Possibly from his experience of portrait painting, where flesh has to be given the colour and tone of life, or something very like it, Constable had realised that far more solid painting in natural colours might be employed in landscape than was commonly done in his time, without any fatal loss of pictorial harmony.

In finished pictures he had to feel his way very carefully, so that even the 'Boat-Building' of 1815, with all its air and luminosity, makes but little advance on the technical practice of Claude. When sketching from nature he had no need of such caution, so that as early as 1811 he made a certain number of studies in which fresh colour is handled as boldly and as freely as in his most mature work. His touch, however, in these studies is rather shapeless, and he has often to depend for unity upon the warm colour of his sketching boards showing between the strokes. Perhaps this incompleteness struck him, for in his studies of the next few years he devotes much closer attention to form, and is much more scientifically sparing in his use of impasto. The charming groups of flowers, the sketch of a cart and horses, the more mature study of the stem of an elm tree, and the silvery 'Dedham Vale' (No. 132), all at South Kensington, will serve as examples of the change.

The 'Flatford Mill' of 1817 in the National Gallery is the first-fruit of these studies. Almost every inch of it is soundly and carefully painted, but the composition is too scattered. This defect is emphasised by the even finish of each individual part, so that the result as a whole is singularly ineffective. The 'Cottage in a Cornfield,' shown at the British Gallery in the following year, is a far more perfect work in every way. Its success may have encouraged Constable to try his hand on a more ambitious canvas—the famous 'White Horse.' I have already given my reasons for thinking that we no longer see this work in anything like the condition in which it left the painter's easel, but as a design it suffers, like the 'Flatford Mill,' from being too scattered, and can never have been quite satisfactory. The 'Stratford Mill' of 1820 is far better composed, and far more solidly painted

too, for to-day it is practically as fresh as when it left the painter's easel more than eighty years ago. The Lucas plate is more showy, but less massive and impressive than the original painting.

The 'Haywain' of 1821 is a respectable picture, more heavily and hotly glazed than the 'Stratford,' but suffers from Constable's prevailing weakness, dilution of emphasis by equal insistence on the individual parts. The results of his migration to Hampstead in the autumn are really more important. Here for a while he devoted himself almost entirely to making studies of skies from nature. The silvery 'Harwich' of 1820 would alone be enough to prove that he was already a sound and brilliant painter of the sunlit cumulus, but after 1821 his mastery of the delicate impalpable cirrus becomes quite remarkable. The charming study at South Kensington (No. 784) unfortunately it is too pale and delicate to photograph well-indicates that Constable, when he chose to do so, could almost rival Turner's subtlety in drawing these floating wisps of vapour. The 'Salt-Box' at Millbank is a good example of the way in which he applied the experience thus gained to the making of a finished picture, for its sky and distance contain some of the most perfect chords of colour, and most perfect suggestions of form, that ever came from his brush.

The fine water-colour of 'Harnham Bridge,' made in 1821, shows how Constable's use of that medium had developed since the days in which he was a follower of Girtin. He still retained much of that master's breadth of mass and richness of tone, but enlivens it with more broken forms and glittering lights than his predecessor would have admitted. For some time, however, Constable had employed water-colour sparingly, for hasty memoranda using the lead pencil, either alone or supplemented now and then by a wash of Indian ink, but always preferring oils for his more elaborate studies. His pencil notes are exceedingly difficult to date accurately. When done in a hurry they are slight and free even during his early maturity, while in his later years they sometimes show all the care and precision of a student. The water-colours vary in the same way, but not to quite the same extent.

SALISBURY CATHEDRAL FROM THE BISHOP'S GARDEN.

Exhibited 1823. From the Oil-Painting at South Kensington.





The large 'View on the Stour' of 1822 is more crisply painted than 'The Haywain,' and is fresher in tone. The 'Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop's Garden' of 1823, the most delicate and airy piece of painting on a considerable scale which Constable had hitherto produced, is notable as being the first large finished work in which his characteristic device for suggesting the glitter of sunlight by spots and scumbles of pure pigment is employed to any extent.

In 1824 the scene of his artistic activity was transferred from London to Brighton, and instead of studies of heaths and meadows he made a number of sketches of sands, downs, and level sea-coast. Most of these are brilliant, while a few indicate a mood of pensive poetry that is unusual with him—reminding one of the delicate seascapes of Mr. Whistler. These sketches differ somewhat in technique from the rest of his work, being executed in rather evenly thick pigment, which makes the shadows semi-opaque and cool.

His well-known composition 'The Lock,' shown at the Royal Academy this year, is a striking proof of the skill he had attained in rendering the wind and sunshine of his native place, and excited general admiration. The large sketch for it, if less gay and brilliant, is more powerful and more majestic. In it the details of the finished picture are omitted or but dimly hinted, so that there is nothing to disturb the breadth of the masses and the rich simple colour. At times it is impossible, in the presence of Constable's large finished pictures, to help feeling that his enthusiasm for nature, by enticing him to suggest, if not to reproduce, every atom of her detail, comes near to overwhelming his feeling for pictorial breadth and harmony. No such criticism could be wielded successfully against this splendid study for 'The Lock,' or against 'The Leaping Horse,' which was Constable's principal contribution to the Academy of 1825. In a previous chapter I have dealt at some length with this magnificent creation. It may be regarded as a kind of landmark in Constable's career by which we may pause and consider briefly the development of the artist's feelings which led to such a conception.

121

During the years of uncertainty preceding his marriage, Constable's habit of thought as reflected in his painting is at first quiet, if rather melancholy. Then in the sketches of 1811 we find for a short time a note of fierce agitation-a preference for tossing clouds, and an almost savage recklessness of brushwork. It will be remembered that, towards the close of this year, even Miss Bicknell herself seemed opposed to his courtship. Later, when the relations between the lovers had grown more intimate, Constable seems to have become resigned, and to have made up his mind to use every effort to attain perfect mastery of his craft. His studies of 1814 and 1815 are thus made singularly precise and accurate, with the intention of catching every possible fragment of fact, and with little or no thought of what might be poetical or artistic. The 'Boat-Building' of 1815, while it indicates how skilful this course of stern discipline had made the painter's hand, is evidently the conception of a calm and contented mind. 'The Cottage in a Cornfield,' shown two years later, has the additional charm of a hint of romance, of a vein of real poetry, less obvious perhaps, less gloomy certainly, but no less genuine than that with which Girtin had inspired him some ten years earlier.

If we may judge his mood from his painting, the first years of Constable's married life must have been the happiest of his existence. At no other period of his career is his mastery of his medium on a small scale more complete, his colour more fresh and simple, and his spirit so tranquil. His larger works still caused him a good deal of trouble, so that it is from the works of lesser size, done between 1817 and 1822, that we catch the most consistent image of his mental serenity. During the next two years overwork and anxiety about the health of his family compel him to sympathise with wilder aspects of nature—storms and rainbows at Hampstead, dim seas and leaden skies at Brighton—so that when in 1825 he paints 'The Leaping Horse,' its majesty seems only a natural development of the studies which preceded it.

Clearly Constable's art owed some of its noblest qualities to the

troubles which made much of his life so restless and unhappy. Had things always gone smoothly with him, he might still have painted the 'Boat-Building' and the 'Cottage in a Cornfield,' and many other quiet beauties of the countryside, but we may doubt whether he would have executed, or even attempted, his more forcible and more tragic designs. Although much of the great art of the world has been done by men who seem to have been always blithe and serene, yet the most intense and affecting outpourings of that art have surely had no such tranquil origin. Beethoven, Michelangelo, and Rembrandt had their moments of happiness, but if they had been always happy their art would hardly have been the rare and passionate thing that it is. Now landscape painting pure and simple, as I have already indicated, deals, as a rule, with such a limited range of subject-matter that it can rouse an interest comparable to that excited by other forms of art only when it is inspired by some grave or vehement emotion. Of such grave and vehement emotion Constable's work had given but few and fitful signs until his mind was racked by suffering, and the gloom and agitation of his spirits compelled his art to take on a sterner mood than was perhaps quite natural to it.

Nevertheless these anxieties and sorrows seem to have influenced Constable's painting but fitfully. Up to 1825 his work moves steadily forward. After that year its movements are uncertain. Sometimes, as in the case of the 'Waterloo Bridge,' the success is great but not quite complete; sometimes, as in the well-known 'Cornfield,' the success is complete but not quite great; while sometimes, as in the much over-rated 'Glebe Farm,' both design and colour fail him. A similar failure in colour may be noticed in the oil-sketches of the year 1834, in which a crude purple predominates, and is made none the less conspicuous by contrast with black, white, hot red, and sharp green.

During the last years of his life it is evident that Constable's control over technique was becoming intermittent, so that his comparatively early death was not perhaps entirely disadvantageous to his reputation. He was at

least spared the pain of knowing that his work was steadily deteriorating, and that the merit of his best painting was in danger of being obscured by the feebler products of old age. 'The Valley Farm' and 'The Cenotaph,' his chief exhibits of 1835 and 1836, prove that he was able to paint exceedingly fine pictures right up to the end of his life, yet it is impossible to deny that in his less important works there is evidence that his success had ceased to be habitual.

The fact seems to be that during the last twelve years of his life, and more especially after his wife's death in 1829, Constable was content to drift along, instead of advancing by any definite effort of his own. 'The Cornfield,' 'The Glebe Farm' and the 'Hampstead Heath' of 1826 and 1827 are earlier, both in conception and in handling, than 'The Leaping Horse' of 1825. In 1829 he does a little pen-and-ink copy of a Swanevelt etching, which, if it were not dated, might well belong to his student days. The 'Dedham Vale' of 1828, and the 'Dell in Helmingham Park' of 1830, are only brilliant enlarged versions of designs made long before. Then, in 1831, we get that masterpiece of vigorous originality, the 'Salisbury from the Meadows,' followed by the 'Romantic House' and the 'Waterloo Bridge' of 1832, and probably by Mr. Orrock's magnificent sketch. He would be a daring critic who, in the absence of evidence, could judge the 'Romantic House' and the 'Waterloo Bridge' to be contemporary; since the former looks as if it had been painted a dozen years before the latter. For this reason I have long felt it practically impossible to arrange Constable's later works upon any system, and can therefore do no more than discuss certain qualities which in a general way characterise them.

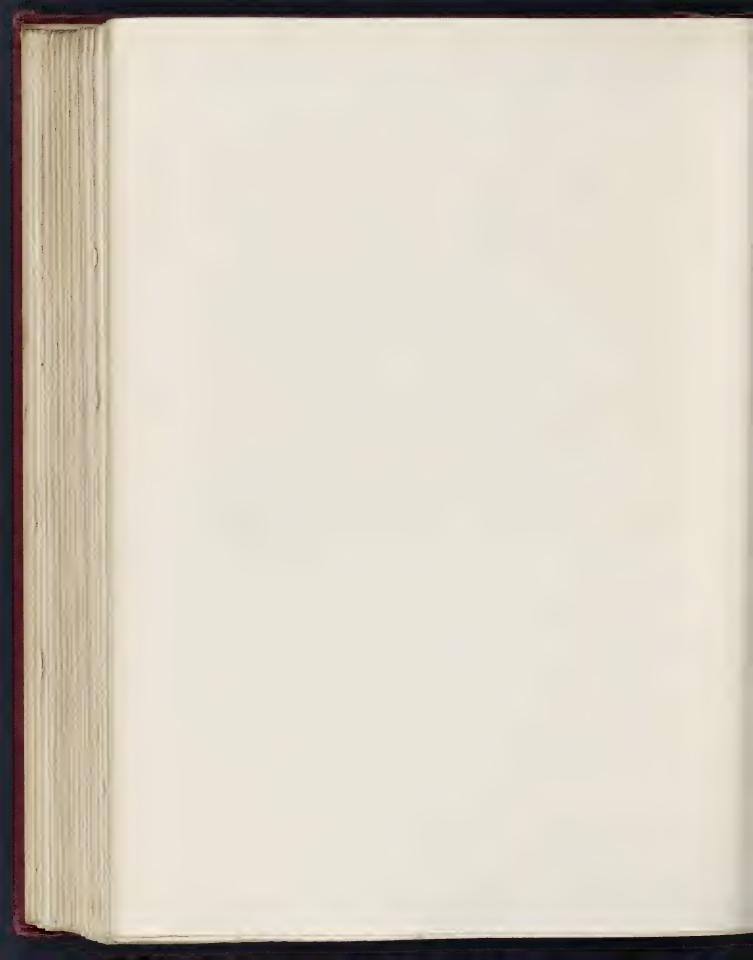
Freshness of colour and luminosity of effect had long been Constable's ideals, and he retained them as such to the end, though during his last years those ideals were affected by a distinct change in his sentiments and in his technique. In sentiment he grew more restless; justifying to some extent Fuseli's jest, 'Bring me mine ombrella.' Even above the bare ruined choirs and lonely monument of 'The Cenotaph,' the sky is

VIEW AT HAMPSTEAD HEATH.

About 1823. From the Oil-Painting at South Kensington.







not allowed to be at peace. As a rule his mood is still less tranquil, and the note of agitation sounds almost without a break.

The delicate, cool colour that he obtained so suavely during the first years of his married life becomes sharp and garish as time goes on; spots and scrapes of pure ultramarine and vermilion being freely used for emphasis, as if some strong condiment were needed to excite the tired palate. That 'exhilarating freshness of spring' which Constable loved in earlier days gives place in his old age to the darker tones of autumn. The monochrome foundation of chiaroscuro, which in happier days he had buried under deftly painted greenery, is left bare and brown in 'The Valley Farm' when Constable returns for the last time to the haunts of his childhood. The broad, simple shadow thus attained casts an air of solemnity over the work which all the silver brightness of the sky, and the glittering of sunlit foliage, white walls, and rippling water by contrast only emphasise.

This luminosity itself is no longer the luminosity of 'The Leaping Horse.' Even in the most brilliant pictures of his middle life the brightness of Constable's sky is always softened and fused into its surroundings by means of a glaze—not, of course, the vulgar bath of hot colour in which a forger 'tones' his glaring rubbish, but something so cool and delicate as to be invisible except by its effect in soothing the raw pigment under it. This effect is exaggerated by dirt in pictures which have been kept for years in London. Works like 'The Lock' and the 'River Stour' which have remained in the country are much fresher and sharper in colour. Towards the end of Constable's life this final glaze is often dispensed with, and the light which interpenetrates a drifting cloud, or flashes from a ripple or from a leaf, is rendered by a scrap of pure pigment laid on with the palette-knife.

That this increase of brightness was not due to any idea of scientific realism is, I think, conclusively proved by Constable's sketches. Now and then, as in the study of a tree trunk at South Kensington (No. 323), we get a rendering of natural tone and colour which is not unworthy of

Manet. As a rule, however, while the lights are put in with the greatest possible degree of force, the shadows remain the shadows of pictorial convention. Constable, in fact, used the palette-knife only to accentuate the deliberately planned contrast of light and darkness on which his designs were based; that is to say, for a pictorial purpose, and not for a scientific one.

He knew that he had an excuse for the practice in the incomparable brightness of nature's own illumination, but he had little or no intention of carrying his mimicry of that brightness consistently through a whole picture. If he ever had such an intention he soon abandoned it. The foreground of the large 'Waterloo Bridge' indicates, perhaps, an attempt of the kind. It is worked entirely with the palette-knife, and the impasto is then modified by glazing. The glaze, however, has emphasised the shapelessness of the palette-knife strokes, and the pigment, in consequence, is unpleasant in quality compared with the broader, simpler results obtainable with the brush. It is quite possible that some such experiment as this was the cause of that despairing saying, 'I have laid down my palette-knife, but not until I had cut my own throat with it.'

In that saying there was not a little truth. Some of the large water-colours executed during Constable's last years, such as the 'Stonehenge,' though they are not always quite happy in colour, show that the artist's vigour and imagination were still as great as they had ever been. In his later oil-painting, however, there is undeniably a certain lack of sensitiveness for beauty of workmanship and material, for which additional brilliancy and contrast do not always completely compensate. In sketches such as Mr. Orrock's, that are frankly nothing more than sketches, the freedom of the handling has the charm of spontaneity to excuse it. In the case of works more deliberately executed, this line of defence has to be abandoned, and we must admit that the force and brilliancy of Constable's later painting were only obtained at a great and almost regrettable sacrifice.

When making this sacrifice in the cause of pictorial effect, Constable also

lost some of his fidelity to nature, for both the sketches and pictures of his old age are undoubtedly less realistic, especially in his shadows, than the work of his maturity. Was it nature's revenge for the cooling of his devotion, or some inherent weakness of taste, which caused his painting to become less beautiful as it became less sincere?





CHAPTER VIII

ENGRAVINGS AFTER CONSTABLE'S WORK



Sketches have at one time or another been translated into black and white, but before turning to these translations, many of which rank quite rightly among the triumphs of British engraving, it may be well to consider briefly the few attempts made by Constable

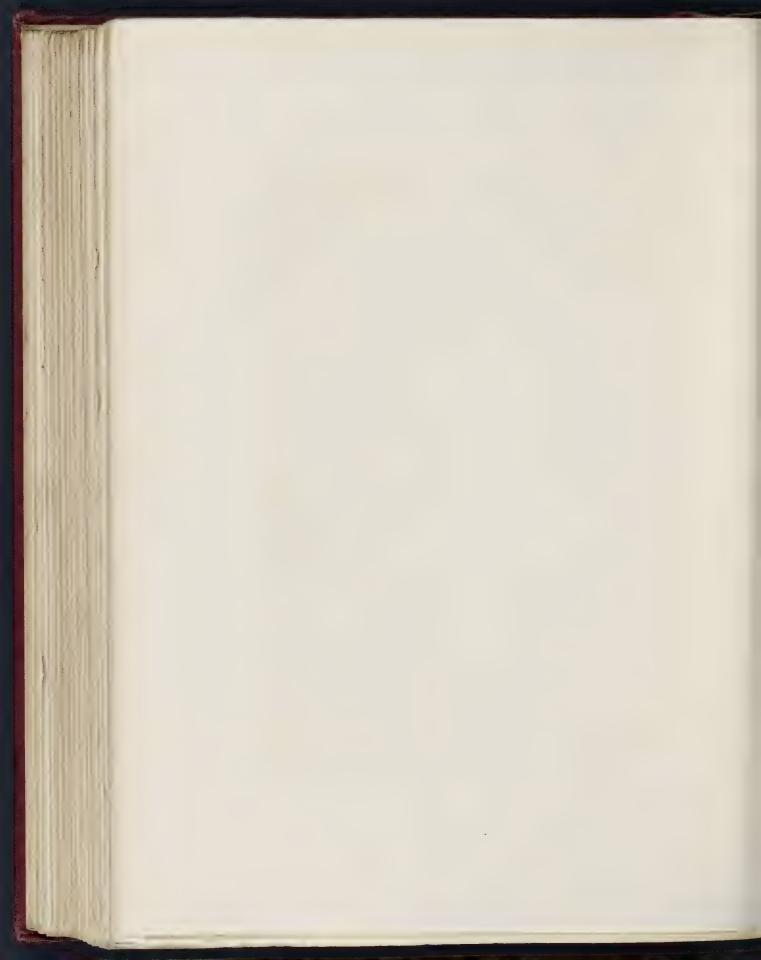
to become his own interpreter.

The first indication of any such effort is contained in a letter to his friend J. T. Smith the engraver ('Antiquity Smith'), dated January 16, 1797. Constable writes: 'I am obliged to you for the directions you sent me for etching, but they were not exactly what I meant. What I fear I am deficient in is the biting.' Of these early experiments in etching I am acquainted with but a single example—a small print in reverse of the early oil-painting 'The Harvest Field,' exhibited by Messrs. Leggatt of Cornhill in December 1899.

HAMPSTEAD HEATH.







The etching was probably executed just a hundred years earlier. The technique of this little plate is evidently based upon Ruysdael and Waterloo, whom we know Constable had been studying, but the deficiency in the biting he mentions in his letter makes the print weak and ineffective. The date of the print of 'Netley Abbey' in the British Museum is uncertain, for the pencil-sketch at South Kensington is dated 1816, while the one study in oil of the subject I have seen can hardly have been done before 1830. However, even if we suppose the etching to be contemporary with the pencilsketch, it shows very clearly how very slowly Constable's knowledge of the medium increased. The 'Netley Abbey' is confused in drawing, ineffective in design, and still deficient in the biting: in fact it shows that even in his fortieth year Constable had quite failed to grasp the first principles of etching. Later in life, however, he executed at least one plate that was not quite unworthy of his genius. The etching, sometimes known as 'Milford Bridge,' with a large clump of trees on the left and a road going over a small arched bridge on the right, is quite a respectable piece of work: as freely handled, and as full of the sense of wind and motion as any modern etcher could wish, and at the same time quite well bitten. If the 'Milford' be identical with the Milford near Salisbury, this etching may be attributed to the year 1829.

Constable's experiments in etching thus seem to have been of a singularly desultory character. This may partly be accounted for first by his lacking any sound technical manual dealing with the medium, and also by the accident of his earliest teachers having been the timid plates of Waterloo and Ruysdael rather than the more rare but far more inspiring etchings of Rembrandt. Had he come in contact with any considerable collection of Rembrandt prints, it is inconceivable that his enthusiasm should not have been excited by the first great master of light and shade, and that he would not have attempted to render with the needle some of those forcible contrasts which make his work in oils so powerful and so attractive. As it is, Constable's etchings as a whole are interesting rather because they come

from his hand than from such little intrinsic merit as they may occasionally possess.

As early as 1815 one of Constable's sketches in the Lake District had been mezzotinted, somewhat coldly, by H. Dawe, but it was not till ten years later that a definite scheme for the reproduction of his work was initiated by an offer from the famous mezzotinter, S. W. Reynolds, to engrave at his own risk the picture of 'The Lock.' Admiration of the picture itself seems to have been his motive, for he writes to the artist:—

'Take it for all in all, since the days of Gainsborough and Wilson no landscape has been painted with so much truth and originality, so much art, and so little artifice.'

The plate was begun, and in January 1825 Constable tells Archdeacon Fisher:—

'Reynolds has got off a proof of my "Lock"; it looks most promising. The size is 13×15 inches (the plate is $13\frac{1}{2} \times 15\frac{1}{2}$). As you say, they cannot engrave any colour or evanescence, but they can the chiaroscuro and the form, and with it most of my sentiment. A bad engraver will not injure me to that degree you think, but it is, as you say, quite impossible to engrave the real essence of my landscape feeling.'

A fatal illness prevented Reynolds from completing the plate and from starting work on Constable's two pictures in Paris. 'The Lock' was finished by another hand, possibly that of his pupil, David Lucas, though the prints bear Reynolds's name alone. An unique early proof at the British Museum shows how broadly and massively Reynolds treated the picture, and even the finished state of the work compares favourably in this respect with the larger print engraved by Lucas in 1834. Leslie says this latter mezzotint was made from another picture, but an examination of the two prints will show that this can hardly have been the case.

As far as the reproduction of his work was concerned, Constable was at once fortunate and unfortunate. He was fortunate in finding a most brilliant and sympathetic interpreter in Reynolds's pupil, David Lucas; and

unfortunate in being quite unable to dispose of the engravings Lucas made for him. Constable seems originally to have conceived the idea of publishing a set of engravings from his work about the year 1829. His intentions in doing so may, perhaps, be gathered from his Preface to the series: 'Various Subjects of Landscape, characteristic of English Scenery, principally intended to display the Phenomena of the Chiar'oscuro of Nature. Published by Mr. Constable, 35 Charlotte St., Fitzroy Square, and sold by Colnaghi, Dominic Colnaghi and Co., Pall Mall, E., 1833.'

In this Introduction Constable writes as follows:-

'The immediate aim of the Author in this publication is to increase the interest for, and promote the study of, the Rural Scenery of England, with all its endearing associations, its amenities, and even in its most simple localities; abounding as it does in grandeur, and every description of Pastoral Beauty; England with her climate of more than vernal freshness, and in whose summer skies and rich autumnal clouds the observer of Nature may daily watch her endless varieties of effect.

'But perhaps it is in its professional character that this work may be most considered, so far as it respects the ART; its aim being to direct attention to the source of one of its most efficient principles, the "Chiar'oscuro of Nature," to mark the influence of light and shadow upon Landscape, not only in its general impression, and as a means of rendering a proper emphasis on the parts, but also to show its use and power as a means of expression, so as to note "the day, the hour, the sunshine, and the shade." In some of these subjects an attempt has been made to arrest the more abrupt and transient appearances of the "Chiar'oscuro in Nature"; to show its effect in the most striking manner, to give "to one brief moment caught from fleeting time" a lasting and sober existence, and to render permanent many of those splendid but evanescent Exhibitions which are ever occurring in the endless varieties of Nature, in her external changes.'

Having thus explained the personal and professional motives that led him to undertake the publication, Constable, after a half apologetic reference

to his partiality for certain particular districts, proceeds to explain his own point of view as regards landscape painting.

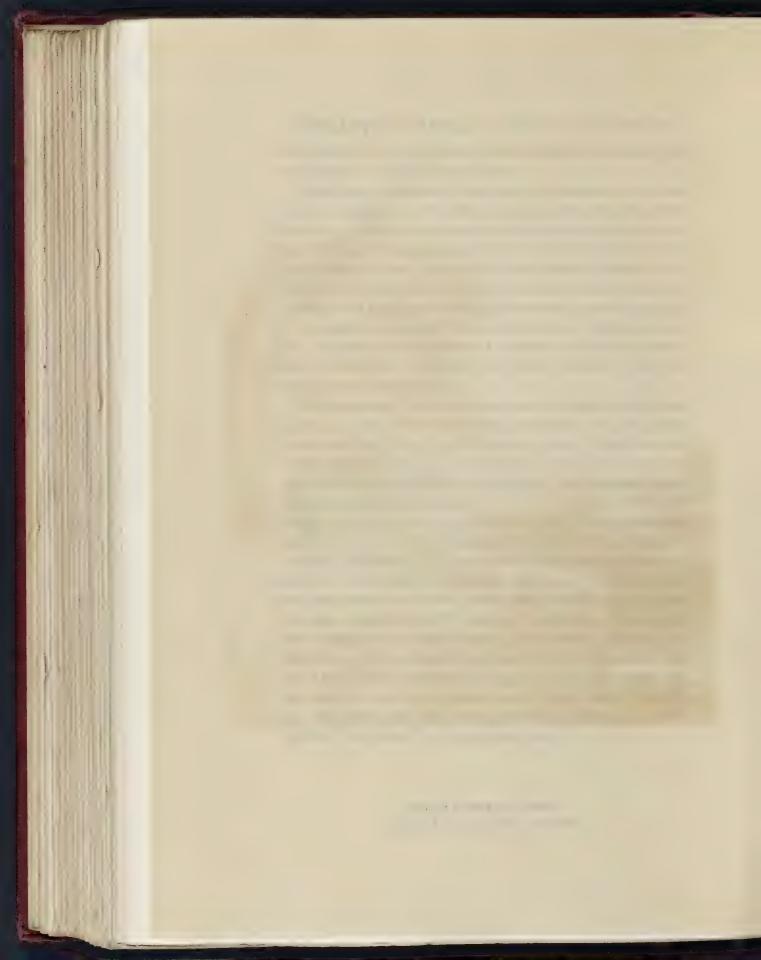
'In art there are two modes by which men aim at distinction. In the one by a careful application to what others have accomplished, the artist imitates their works, or selects and combines their various beauties; in the other he seeks excellence at its primitive source—Nature. In the first he forms a style upon the study of pictures, and produces either imitative or eclectic art; in the second by a close observation of Nature he discovers qualities existing in her which have never been portrayed before, and thus forms a style which is original.'

Like most other private publications, the work was issued unmethodically. Constable had originally intended to dedicate it to Archdeacon Fisher, but the Archdeacon died before the first number was ready, so the series came out without a dedication.

The preparation of the plates occupied much of Constable's time during the last seven years of his life, and his correspondence with Lucas shows an incessant anxiety to get the best possible results. Plates were continually altered in detail, and sometimes wholly re-engraved. Others were rejected to make way for entirely fresh subjects. Even the colour of the wrappers was not always uniform, and the collector of to-day is puzzled by finding one part in a blue wrapper, another in a pink one, while the date on the wrappers does not always correspond with that on the title-page or on the plates. According to the note prefixed to the 1855 reprint of Constable's plates, five of the subjects were engraved while he lived but withheld from publication, thirteen were engraved after his death, and twenty-two (excluding the vignette) appeared during his lifetime. Constable's own list gives the titles of only twenty-one plates (excluding the vignette) as comprising the series, although he had originally contemplated making the total twenty-six, while Lucas issued a prospectus of fourteen more. The statement in the 1855 edition is thus in all probability wrong, but the variation serves to show how uncertain the exact history of the set at present is. In the Appendix I have followed the original printed lists.

A BOAT PASSING A LOCK.

Exhibited 1824. From the Mezzotint by S. W. Reynolds.







The publication was a dead failure from the first. The circle of Constable's admirers in England was too small to make the sale of his plates remunerative, and his Continental reputation could not help him. We thus find him writing to Lucas as early as 1837:—

'I have thought much on my book, and all my reflections on the subject go to oppress me; its duration, its expense, its hopelessness of remuneration, added to which I now discover that the printsellers are watching it as their lawful prey, and they alone can help me. I can only dispose of it by giving it away. My plan is to confine the number of plates to those now on hand; I see we have about twenty. The three present numbers contain twelve; others begun are about eight or ten more, some of which may not be resumed, and we must begin the frontispiece. It harasses my days, and disturbs my rest at nights. The expense is too enormous for a work that has nothing but your beautiful feeling and execution to recommend it. The painter himself is totally unpopular, and ever will be on this side of the grave; the subject nothing but the art, and the buyers wholly ignorant of that.'

The series makes no attempt at being representative of every variety of English scenery. Not a plate conveys the suggestion that England is anything but a pastoral country of quiet fields and leisurely rivers, with occasional stretches of common land, a few fishing-villages, and a lonely sea-coast. When Constable visited Derbyshire and the Lake District it is evident from his sketches that the mountains had affected him deeply. Nevertheless, when he chose the subjects for his engravings, he rejected all his crags and mists and torrents in favour of the richer, quieter scenery he had loved from childhood.

Each of the plates in the original issue was accompanied by appropriate letterpress. Some of the descriptions are so strikingly eloquent as to make it quite clear that had Constable's inclinations lain in that direction he might have attained an honourable place among the masters of English prose.

He writes thus, for instance, of the splendid church at Stoke-by-Nayland:—

'Suffolk, and many other of the eastern counties, abound in venerable Gothic churches, many of them of a size which cannot fail to strike the stranger with admiration and surprise: and a melancholy but striking characteristic of these churches is their being found in situations now comparatively lonely, some of them standing in obscure villages containing a few scattered houses only, and those but ill according with such large and beautiful structures. . . . The vast size of these noble structures, with the charm that the mellowing hand of time has cast over them, gives them an aspect of extreme solemnity and grandeur, and they stand lasting monuments of the power and splendour of our ecclesiastical government, as well as of the piety and skill of our ancestors.'

And again of the 'Old Sarum':-

'The present appearance of Old Sarum, wild, desolate, and dreary, contrasts strongly with its former splendour. This celebrated city, which once gave laws to the whole kingdom, and where the earliest parliaments on record were convened, can now only be traced by vast embankments and ditches, tracked only by sheep-walks.' And, in a note to a friend, he says: 'Who can visit such a solemn spot, once the most powerful city of the West, and not feel the truth and fulness of the words of St. Paul: "Here we have no continuing city"?'

Of the engravings themselves it is almost impossible to speak too highly. Several of them, it is true—the 'White Horse' and the 'Arundel Mill,' for example—look somewhat crowded with detail, in consequence of the great difference between the size of the original painting and the size of the plate. The majority, however, were engraved from sketches or studies hardly larger than the prints, so that the result corresponds admirably with the artist's original conception.

The cause of the remarkable success of these little mezzotints is obvious to all who understand the principle of Constable's work. As he exemplifies in his technical practice, and as he explains in his Preface to the series, his art was based upon chiaroscuro, upon a very definite arrangement of light

and shade. His sketches, with all their vividness and freshness of colour, are really constructed on a monochrome foundation, so that they retain their unity of composition when the colour is taken away. Yet if Constable's own artistic principles were thus responsible for much of his engraver's success, some considerable share of that success must also be allotted to Lucas.

Lucas at the time he co-operated with Constable was a man of about thirty. He had been trained by the brilliant mezzotinter, S. W. Reynolds, from whom he doubtless acquired much of that feeling for richness of tone and freedom of handling which characterises his work. His master's engraving often verged on the theatrical, through over-insistence on breadth and contrast. In Lucas this tendency was modified by the peculiar nature of Constable's painting. The contrast he retained, as a substitute, perhaps, for the brilliant colour which an engraver must sacrifice; but his love of breadth was just what was wanted to modify Constable's tendency to spottiness. By merging the painter's flickering lights in broad masses of half-tone, Lucas gives Constable's work an air of solemnity which is not always evident in the paintings. The prints may be less bright, less showery, less breezy than Constable's sketches, but they are also less unquiet. Lucas, in fact, added to the painter's work one great quality in which it was sometimes deficient—the quality of gravity; and to that addition the unique excellence of his plates is due. Constable himself recognised the difference-in one letter he cautions Lucas chaffingly, 'Avoid the soot-bag and you are safe: Rembrandt had no soot-bag, you may rely on it'-but showed the good sense and good taste to acquiesce in the engraver's modification of his work.

What Constable meant by 'the soot-bag' can easily be seen from the early proofs of some of Lucas's plates. Compare, for instance, the cool, pearly tones of the sketch for the 'Summer Morning' (South Kensington, No. 132) with the first state of the print in the British Museum. In Lucas's hands the delicate shimmering sunlight has given place to majestic gloom. The composition remains as it was, but the sentiment of the piece has

entirely altered, and instead of the exhilarating freshness and brightness of a fine day, a dark, menacing sky, in which the very flashes of light only accentuate the shadows above and below them, broods over the Vale of Dedham. Grand as the print is, Constable evidently felt that it was not the same thing as his sketch, and had it considerably lightened before he issued it, altering and amplifying at the same time the group in the foreground. Such alterations in the composition while the engraving was in progress were by no means uncommon. In the noble plate of 'Willy Lott's House,' the figure of Constable's father on horseback seems to have been inserted from a separate sketch, as it does not appear in the original oil-study for the engraving at South Kensington (No. 166). The more shadowy and theatrical print called 'Castleacre Priory' was originally an engraving of 'The Glebe Farm' with which Constable was dissatisfied. By some alteration of the masses, which one can trace from the first state in the Print Room of the British Museum, he enabled Lucas to transform the plate to its present condition. A careful examination of the print will show that the original design was only in part obliterated. Constable himself writes of it thus: 'I have added a Ruin to the little 'Glebe Farm,' for not to have a symbol in the book of myself and of the work I have projected would be missing the opportunity.'

It is impossible to mention all the plates of this series in detail, but a few of them live too persistently in the memory to be passed over without some short notice. No subject, for instance, could be more thoroughly characteristic of Constable than the 'Spring,' with its fresh wind, breaking hail squalls, sudden bursts of light, and straining windmill—a windmill on Bergholt Common in which the artist himself worked, and where years afterwards Mr. Sheepshanks found his name neatly carved on one of its timbers. Think, too, of the 'Summerland,' where the fields and hedgerows above Dedham sweep up in so grand a darkness under a canopy of cloud; of the more tremendous gloom and space of the storm over Weymouth Bay; of the savage desolation of the 'Old Sarum'; of the tossing fiery sky and

THE OPENING OF WATERLOO BRIDGE (SMALLER VERSION).

About 1824. From the Oil-Painting at South Kensington.







broad sweeps of sunlit meadow in the 'Summer Evening' (this by the way is termed by Leslie the least successful of all Lucas's plates!); or of the utter quiet of the figures seated in the churchyard at East Bergholt, and then you will recognise how wide and deep and various is the emotional significance of these little engravings.

Lucas's larger plates are magnificent as tours de force, but are, if anything, too obviously brilliant everywhere to have quite the dignity and simplicity of his small mezzotints. 'The Lock' and the 'Dedham Vale' are a trifle overcrowded with clever flashes of light, and the 'Stratford Mill' seems to lack solidity. His print of 'The Cornfield' is, of course, wonderfully rich and strong, though more restless than the picture, perhaps because paint in the course of eighty years of exposure to London air and dirt becomes flatter, quieter, and more harmonious, while the relations of tone in an engraving, provided the ink and paper be good, are unalterable. No praise, however, can be extravagant for the large 'Salisbury from the Meadows' ('The Rainbow'). The picture itself, though perhaps a trifle more rhetorical than the perfect ideal of art would be, is one of the most glorious landscapes ever painted, and the engraving does full justice to its strength and splendour. When such a print is still in one state or another generally well known and fairly accessible, it is hard to understand how some of our modern engravers can be content to turn out their timid, fluffy, nerveless work without appearing ever to have felt one single touch of inspiration from the brilliant sword-play with which Lucas shapes his keen flashes of light, or from the tremulous, shimmering half-tones that charge his shadows with such deep mystery.

Yet, if Constable was fortunate in meeting with such a gifted and sympathetic interpreter, Lucas would seem to have been still more fortunate in being engaged to do a mass of work which suited his temper so perfectly. From the forties to his death in 1881 he produced a large number of engravings after other painters, but with the exception of a grand print from Girtin's 'Bridge over the Ouse,' a brilliant reproduction of one of Harding's works, and three or four renderings of sketches by Gainsborough, there is

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nothing of his one can think of with pleasure, and little that one can recollect without positive pain. His talent seems to have been utterly crushed by the rubbish he was commissioned to reproduce, and his engraving became as tame and inept as his originals. Lucas, in fact, seems to have been a man of more talent than strength of character. When he had to interpret a dullard's work he was apt to become a dullard himself, so that had he never met with Constable he would in all probability have deserved the oblivion which till the last year or two has overwhelmed his name.

The plates done by Mr. Frank Short after Constable are of so high an order of excellence that one cannot help regretting they are not more numerous. The little print of 'The Gleaners,' from the sketch bequeathed to the National Gallery by Mr. Henry Vaughan, shows how much of the spirit of Lucas Mr. Short has inherited. Its airy freshness and delicacy make it a thing which could be placed without discredit among the best plates in the 'English Landscape Scenery.' It is not, perhaps, quite so strong and forcible as Lucas would have made it; but Mr. Short's experience in engraving Turner has enabled him to suggest infinite gradations of aerial tone, and to put a refinement of drawing into the cloud-forms which the older master might have overlooked.

The large print by Mr. William Hole after 'The Jumping Horse' is interesting in another way. Mr. Hole works in a different spirit from any other modern etcher. His ambition extends beyond mere rendering of tone and suggestion of colour to imitating the actual pigment surface and brushwork of his original. In these days, when photography has become such an exact science, this can usually be done by the camera, though, in the case of Constable, most of the photographic reproductions hitherto accessible are not things on which their makers can be congratulated. A fine print of 'The Valley Farm,' done quite recently, is a remarkable exception. Mr. Hole's plate of a windmill after John Crome is in its way a tour de force of striking imitative exactness. In 'The Jumping Horse,' however, he seems to have found a subject that taxed all his energies. The peculiar

quality of Constable's palette-knife work, the spotting and scraping and loading of the lights, are rendered with amazing skill. In imitating the pigment of the sky, however, the imitation has only been obtained by a considerable sacrifice of luminosity, and the whole print has rather a heavy look, owing to a slight opacity in the shadows. Nevertheless the thing is a marvel of patient labour, and would appear still more wonderful if one could help comparing it with some of Mr. Hole's other plates.

Most of the remaining reproductions of Constable's work do not call for criticism. There is a steady commercial demand for large etchings and engravings printed in a comfortable shade of warm brown, and it is a mere accident if these things are connected with any painter in particular. Probably Constable does not sell half so well as the churches, or sunsets, or plump children, or pretty women which the buyers of such things appear to prefer, although every effort seems to have been made by his engravers to make him look just like every one else. In these prints, in fact, Constable is almost transformed into the person he so sturdily while living declined to be, a 'gentlemen-and-ladies' painter.'





CHAPTER IX

CONSTABLE'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS PAINTING



R. RUSKIN, in his day, was undoubtedly the most eloquent as well as the most popular of writers upon Art. Indeed, his wonderful powers of description, his wealth of imagery, and his mastery of invective, will always secure for him a high place among the great writers of rhetorical prose. His influence, in con-

sequence, is still a very notable force with the public. It is thus imperative that any newer criticism should take his opinions into account, and also, if it aims at amending or even reconsidering his decisions, should be strongly supported at every point. Luckily, as far as Constable is concerned, there is no ambiguity about Mr. Ruskin's attitude. He says what he thinks in the plainest possible way, in terms which admit of no misconstruction or misunderstanding. Constable too, in his letters and papers, has recorded

DEDHAM LOCK, OR THE LEAPING HORSE.

Exhibited 1825.







his own feelings about painting at considerable length, so that a comparison between the two is merely a matter of quotation on each side. Let us hear Mr. Ruskin first.

'The feelings of Constable with respect to his art might be almost a model for the young student, were it not that they err a little on the other side, and are perhaps in need of chastening and guiding from the works of his fellow-men. We should use pictures not as authorities, but as comments on nature, just as we use divines not as authorities, but as comments on the Bible. Constable, in his dread of saint-worship, deprives himself of much instruction from the Scripture to which he holds, because he will not accept aid in the reading of it from the learning of other men' (Modern Painters, i. p. xxxix, n.).

Later Mr. Ruskin goes into more detail.

'I have already alluded to the simplicity and earnestness of the mind of Constable; to its vigorous rupture with school laws, and to its unfortunate error on the opposite side. Unteachableness seems to have been a main feature of his character, and there is corresponding want of veneration in the way he approaches nature herself. His early education and associations were also against him; they induced in him a morbid preference of subjects of a low order. I have never seen any work of his in which there were any signs of his being able to draw, and hence even the most necessary details are painted by him inefficiently. His works are also eminently wanting both in rest and refinement: and Fuseli's jesting compliment is too true; for the showery weather, in which the artist delights, misses alike the majesty of storm and the loveliness of calm weather; it is greatcoat weather and nothing more. There is strange want of depth in the mind which has no pleasure in sunbeams but when piercing painfully through clouds, nor in foliage but when shaken by the wind, nor in light itself but when flickering, glistening, restless, and feeble. Yet, with all these deductions, his works are to be deeply respected as thoroughly original, thoroughly honest, free from affectation, manly in manner, frequently successful in cool colour, and

realising certain motives of English scenery with perhaps as much affection as such scenery, unless when regarded through media of feeling derived from higher sources, is calculated to inspire' (Modern Painters, i. pp. 92, 93).

Whether Constable really possessed the 'morbid preference for subjects of a low order' which Mr. Ruskin ascribes to him, and whether his works are 'eminently wanting in rest and refinement,' are questions which must be dealt with elsewhere. Those who are well acquainted with Constable's work will be able to decide for themselves whether he ever shows 'any signs of being able to draw,' and will recognise that the isolated passages selected by Mr. Ruskin from Lucas's little mezzotints are hardly fair argument. All, however, that we are concerned with at present is Constable's attitude towards his art, so that this is the only portion of Mr. Ruskin's criticism which can be dealt with at length in this place.

Constable, then, according to Mr. Ruskin, refused to be taught by his predecessors, and at the same time approached nature without veneration. Even his realism, such as it was, seems to have been entirely false, for later Mr. Ruskin writes:—

'The bad painter gives the cheap, deceptive resemblance. The good painter gives the precious, non-deceptive resemblance. Constable perceives in a landscape that the grass is wet, the meadows flat, and the boughs shady; that is to say, about as much as, I suppose, might in general be apprehended between them by an intelligent fawn and a skylark. Turner perceives at a glance the whole sum of visible truth open to human intelligence' (Modern Painters, iii. p. 131).

The Appendix to the volume shows that this passage, and the attack on Constable's drawing to which I have alluded, were not due to any momentary fit of ill-humour. Mr. Ruskin obligingly explains his attitude thus:—

'The reader might, however, perhaps suspect me of ill-will towards Constable, owing to my continually introducing him for depreciatory comparison. So far from this being the case, I had, as will be seen in various

passages of the first volume, considerable respect for the feeling with which he worked: but I was compelled to do harsh justice upon him now because Mr. Leslie, in his unadvised and unfortunate rechauffé of the fallacious art maxims of the last century, has suffered his personal regard for Constable so far to prevail over his judgment as to bring him forward as a great artist, comparable in some kind with Turner. As Constable's reputation was, even before this, most mischievous in giving countenance to the blotting and blundering of Modernism, I saw myself obliged, though unwillingly, to carry the suggested comparison thoroughly out' (Modern Painters, iii. p. 343).1

To carry another comparison thoroughly out for ourselves, we must turn to the writings and lectures of this unfortunate being, whose reputation has been so harmful to his successors, whose work was eminently lacking in rest and refinement, who was unable to paint the most necessary details efficiently, and yet refused to be taught by the art of the past, and approached nature without veneration.

Writing in 1821 to his friend Archdeacon Fisher, Constable incidentally mentions what made him first think of painting.

'How much I wish I had been with you on your fishing excursion to the New Forest! What river can it be? But the sound of water escaping from mill-dams, etc., willows, old rotten planks, slimy posts, and brickwork, I love such things. Shakespeare could make everything poetical: he tells us of poor Tom's haunts among "sheepcotes and mills." As long as I do paint I shall never cease to paint such places. They have always been my delight, and I should indeed have been delighted in seeing what you describe, and in your company, "in the company of a man to whom nature does not spread her volume in vain." Still, I should paint my own places best; painting with me is but another word for feeling, and I associate my careless boyhood with all that lies on the banks of the Stour. Those scenes made me a painter, and I am grateful; that is, I had often thought of pictures of them before I ever touched a pencil. . . .'

¹ I have quoted in all cases from the 1888 edition of Modern Painters.

In 1802, at the outset of his career in London, Constable had written to his friend Dunthorne: 'For the last two years I have been running after pictures, and seeking the truth at second-hand. I have not endeavoured to represent nature with the same elevation of mind with which I set out, but have rather tried to make my performances look like the work of other men. . . . I shall return to Bergholt, where I shall endeavour to get a pure and unaffected manner of representing the scenes that may employ me. There is little or nothing in the exhibition worth looking up to. There is room enough for a natural painter. The great vice of the present day is bravura, an attempt to do something beyond the truth.'

Ten years later a letter to his *fiancée* shows that his passion for his native place was undiminished and his determination unaltered.

'I am still,' he writes, 'looking towards Suffolk, where I hope to pass the greater part of the summer; as much for the sake of study as on any other account. You know I have always succeeded best with my native scenes. They have always charmed me, and I hope they always will. I have now a path marked out very distinctly for myself, and I am desirous of pursuing it uninterruptedly.'

Again, in 1824, he writes to Fisher thus: 'My "Lock" is liked at the Academy, and indeed it forms a decided feature, and its light cannot be put out, because it is the light of nature, the mother of all that is valuable in poetry, painting, or anything else where an appeal to the soul is required. . . . But my execution annoys most of them, and all the scholastic ones. Perhaps the sacrifices I make for lightness and brightness are too great: but these things are the essence of landscape, and my extreme is better than white-lead and oil and dado painting.'

His extraordinary love of nature is indicated by the testimony of his friends. Mr. George Field, for instance, writes to Leslie as follows:—

'At all times of the day and night, and in all seasons of the year, Constable had inexpressible delight in viewing the works of nature. I have been out with him after all colour of the landscape had disappeared, and

THE CORNFIELD.

Exhibited 1826.







objects were seen only as skeletons and masses, yet his eye was still active for his art. "These were the things," said he, "that Gainsborough studied, and of which we have so many exquisite specimens in his drawings."

Leslie too says: 'I have seen him admire a fine tree with an ecstasy of delight like that with which he would catch up a beautiful child in his arms.'

Constable's own words are, however, the best answer to the accusation that he lacked veneration for nature. In 1819, for instance, he writes from Bergholt to his wife:—

'Everything seems full of blossom of some kind, and at every step I take, and on whatever object I turn my eyes, that sublime expression of the Scriptures, "I am the resurrection and the life," seems as if uttered near me.'

And again, in the last lecture he ever delivered, Constable speaks thus:-

'The young painter who, regardless of present popularity, would leave a name behind him, must become the patient pupil of nature. . . . The landscape painter must walk the fields with an humble mind. No arrogant man was ever permitted to see nature in all her beauty. If I may be allowed to use a very solemn quotation, I would say most emphatically to the student, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth."

Towards the end of this lecture Constable showed by numerous quotations how there had never been an age, however rude and uncultivated, in which the love of landscape had not in some way been manifested. One of these passages illustrates so admirably Constable's sympathy with those who in the past had had feelings like his own, and is so beautiful in itself, that I cannot forbear to quote it in full.

'At a time when Europe was agitated in an unusual manner, when all was diplomacy, all was politics, Machiavellian and perfidious, Cardinal Bembo wrote thus to the Pope, who had been crowning the Emperor Charles v. at Bologna: "While your Holiness has been these last days in the theatre of the world, among so many lords and great men, whom none now alive have ever seen together before, and has placed on the head of Charles v. the rich,

splendid, and honoured crown of the Empire, I have been residing in my little village, where I have thought on you in a quiet, and to me, dear and delicious, solitude. I have found the country above the usage of any former years, from the long serenity of these gliding months, and by the sudden mildness of the air, already quite verdant, and the trees in full leaf. Even the vines have deceived the peasantry by their luxuriance, which they were obliged to prune. I do not remember to have seen at this time so beautiful a season. Not only the swallows, but all other birds that do not remain with us in the winter, but return to us in the spring, have made this new, and soft, and joyous sky resound with their charming melodies. I could not therefore regret your festivities at Bologna.—Padua, April 7, 1530."

Constable's affection for nature may have been limited, but within its limits it was undoubtedly sincere and strong, for it had to stand the test of steady discouragement. Nevertheless his letters show how much he felt foolish criticism. 'I cannot paint down to ignorance,' he writes; and again, 'My pictures will never be popular, for they have no handling. But I do not see handling in nature.' So in 1821, in a letter to his great friend, he says: 'Believe me, my dear Fisher, I should almost faint by the way when I am standing before my large canvases, were I not cheered and encouraged by your friendship and approbation. I now fear (for my family's sake) I shall never make a popular artist, a gentleman-and-ladies' painter.'

Leslie, too, mentions finding the following note on a scrap of paper among Constable's memoranda: 'My art flatters nobody by *imitation*, it courts nobody by *smoothness*, it tickles nobody by *petiteness*, it is without either *fal-de-lal* or *fiddle-de-dee*; how then can I hope to be popular?'

Nor was it only on the part of the public that sympathy was lacking. Constable's brother artists must sometimes have been disheartening acquaintances.

'I met Callcott at dinner the other day,' he writes to Leslie. . . . 'He thinks I do not believe what I say, and only want to attract attention by

singularity; but my pictures being my acts, show to my cost that I am sincere, for

"He who hangs, or beats his brains, The devil's in him if he feigns."

But he is on the safe side.'

Sometimes, however, Constable's sense of humour enabled him to turn the tables on his critics. He writes, for instance, to Leslie in 1831:—

'Varley, the astrologer, has just called on me, and I have bought a little drawing of him. He told me how to "do landscape," and was so kind as to point out all my defects. The price of the drawing was "a guinea and a half to a gentleman, and a guinea only to an artist," but I insisted on his taking the larger sum, as he had clearly proved to me that I was no artist.'

Constable's enthusiasm for nature was not confined wholly to landscape. When still a student attending a series of anatomical lectures, he tells his friend Dunthorne:—

'I am so much more interested in the study than I had expected, that I congratulate myself on being so fortunate as to have attended these lectures. Excepting astronomy (and that I know little of), I believe no study is really so sublime, or goes more to carry the mind to the Divine Architect. Indeed the whole machine which it has pleased God to form for the accommodation of the real man, the mind, during its probation in this vale of tears, is as wonderful as the contemplation of it is affecting. I see, however, many instances of the truth, and a melancholy truth it is, that a knowledge of the things created does not always lead to a veneration of the Creator.'

From these few passages we can judge how much importance is to be attached to Mr. Ruskin's charge that Constable approached nature without reverence. We can now pass to the statement that Constable refused to be taught by the art of other men.

It is undeniable that Constable disliked and despised the works of many painters of considerable reputation with dealers and the general public. Had

he not done so indeed, he could hardly have been an artist himself, for no artist, however wide-minded and tolerant, can view all his predecessors with equal affection. He must of necessity admire those with whose aims he can sympathise, and regard with coldness, if not with actual repulsion, those with whom he can feel no spiritual kinship. Such preferences, indeed, are indications of an artist's taste, though not always of his talent. A man may have a genuine and enthusiastic admiration for the great painting or great poetry of the past, and yet be devoid of any creative faculty which would enable him to become himself a great painter or a great poet. Nevertheless, however great his creative or executive faculties may be, the man whose admiration is always lavished on mediocre or worthless art must, for want of a better ideal, be himself a mediocrity.

Constable, then, may not of necessity have been wrong in despising certain kinds of art, provided those kinds of art were vicious or worthless. His very dislike of them in fact would be a point in his favour, as indicating the soundness of his taste. As he was in the habit of speaking his mind freely on all matters connected with his art, there is no difficulty in ascertaining what he really thought.

He was evidently a good technical critic of pictures. Leslie in one of his letters acknowledges the help Constable's advice had been to him thus:—

'I am afraid you did not quite understand what I meant by your keen eye. I am only afraid of it because I know no fault can escape it. Do not for a moment imagine I am insensible of my obligations to it. You not only did me the greatest service in inducing me to enlarge my "Sancho," but you entirely composed my "Sterne and the Frenchwoman"; that is, you composed the light and shadow for me. I am not aware that I have painted a picture since I have known you that has not been, in some degree, the better for your remarks, and I constantly feel that if I could please you with what I do, I should be sure to please myself.'

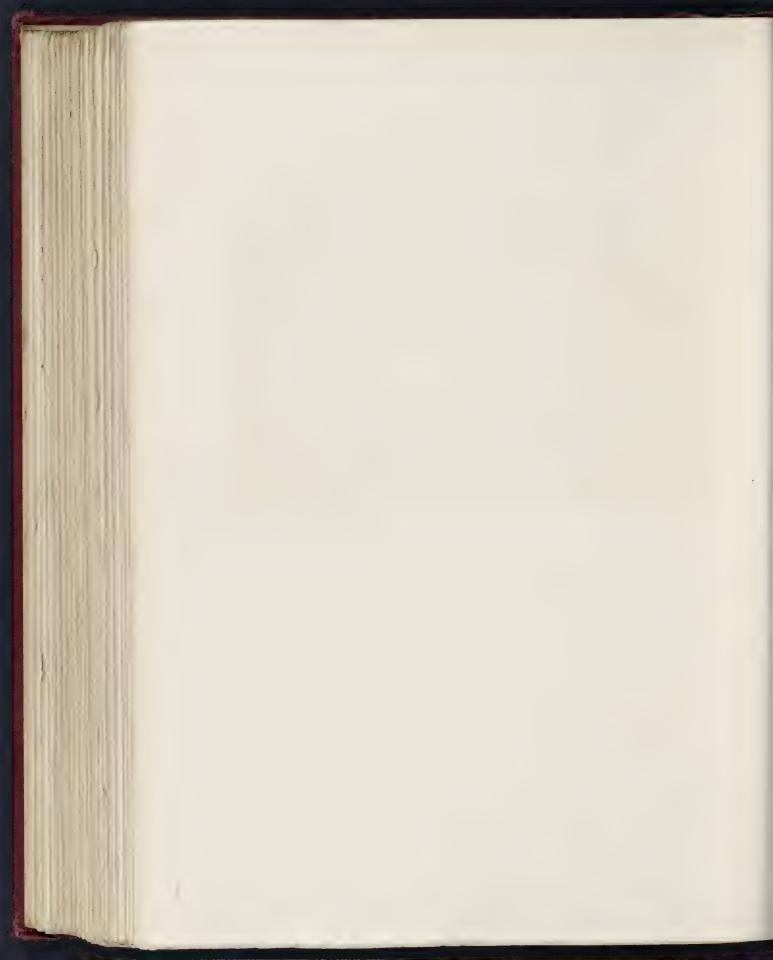
One example at least of such criticism is still extant. Leslie had been copying Watteau's exquisite little picture in the Dulwich Gallery, 'The Ball,'



A COUNTRY LANE.

About 1826. From the Oil-Painting in the National Gallery.





and had asked Constable to look at the copy. This is the landscape painter's criticism:—

'Your Watteau looked colder than the original, which seemed as if painted in honey—so mellow, so tender, so soft, and so delicious; so I trust yours will be; but be satisfied if you touch but the hem of his garment, for this inscrutable and exquisite thing would vulgarise even Rubens and Paul Veronese.'

He could at times be justly severe on his favourites. Speaking of a Claude at Petworth, he says:—

'The Claude I well know, grand and solemn, but dull, cold, and heavy—a picture of his old age. Claude's exhilaration and light departed from him when he was between fifty and sixty, and he then became a professor of the "higher walks of art," and fell, in a great degree, into the manner of the painters around him. . . . Hobbema, he adds later, if he misses colour, is very disagreeable, as he has neither shape nor composition.

Constable did not confine his criticisms to pictures belonging to others, but was himself a collector. When only twenty-three, three years before he exhibited at the Royal Academy, he mentions purchasing a very fine picture by Ruysdael, in partnership with Mr. Reinagle, for £70. Elsewhere he speaks of the drawings by Cozens and Gainsborough hanging in his rooms, and a few years before his death we find him writing to a friend declining to purchase a Cuyp, saying, 'Your picture has a beautiful look, but I shall not collect any more. I have sent most of my old men to Mr. Davidson's Gallery in Pall Mall to be sold. I find my house too much encumbered with lumber, and this encumbers my mind.'

He was frank enough about the pictures he disliked, and his reasons for disliking them:—

'In art there are two modes by which men aim at distinction. In the one, by a careful application to what others have accomplished, the artist imitates their works, or selects and combines their various beauties; in the other, he seeks excellence at its primitive source—nature. In the first he

forms a style upon the study of pictures, and produces either imitative or eclectic art; in the second by a close observation of nature he discovers qualities in her which have never been portrayed before, and thus forms a style which is original.'

Archdeacon Fisher quotes a passage from Sharon Turner's History of England:—

'It has been remarked that great excellence is usually followed by a decline. No second Augustan age is found to occur. A Virgil emerges, and, as if he cast on his countrymen an everlasting spell, no future Virgil appears—no second Homer or Euripides—no succeeding Pindar, Horace, Demosthenes, Thucydides, Tacitus, or Cicero. The fact is remarkable. But it is accounted for, not in a want of talent, but in the destruction of talent by injudicious education. It is in literature as in painting; if we study departed excellence too intensely we only imitate; we extinguish genius and sink below our models. If we make ourselves copyists, we become inferior to those we copy.'

Constable answers:-

'All your quotations are good, and make for my grand theory. It is the rod and staff of my practice, and can never fail or deceive its possessor.'

In this spirit he criticises an exhibition in 1822:—

'Could you but see the folly and ruin exhibited at the British Gallery you would go mad. Van de Velde and Gaspar Poussin and Titian are made to spawn multitudes of abortions, and for what are the great masters brought into this disgrace? Only to serve the purpose of sale. Hofland has sold a shadow of Gaspar Poussin for eighty guineas, and it is no more like Gaspar than the shadow of a man on a muddy road is like himself.'

At one moment, indeed, Mr. Ruskin is almost justified, for Constable's dread of picture-worship even carries him so far as to fear the results of the formation of a National Gallery:—

'Should there be a National Gallery (which is talked of), there will be an end of the art in poor old England, and she will become, in all that

relates to painting, as much a nonentity as every other country that has one. The reason is plain: the manufacturers of pictures are then made the criterions of perfection, instead of nature.'

A more definite and complete statement of his views on the kind of art which he regarded as dangerous and worthless occurs at the close of the first of his lectures on landscape, delivered at Hampstead in 1833:—

'I shall conclude with a brief allusion to a certain set of painters, who, having substituted falsehood for truth, and formed a style mean and mechanical, are termed mannerists. Much of the confusion of opinions in art arising from false taste is caused by works of this stamp; for if the mannerists had never existed painting would always have been easily understood. The education of a professed connoisseur being chiefly formed in the picture gallery and auction room, seldom enables him to perceive the vast difference between the mannerist and the genuine painter. To do this requires long and close study, and a constant comparison of the art with nature. So few among the buyers and sellers of pictures possess any knowledge so derived, that the works of the mannerists often bear as large a price in the market as those of the genuine painters. The difference is not understood by picture-dealers, and thus, in a mercantile way, has a kind of art been propagated and supported from age to age, deserving only to be classed with the showy and expensive articles of drawing-room furniture. To this species of painting belong the works that have marked the decay of styles, and filled the intervals between the appearances of the great artists. They are the productions of men who have lost sight of nature, and strayed into the vacant fields of idealism, sometimes, indeed, with talent and even with power, as in Wouvermans, Berghem, Both, Vernet, Zuccherelli, and Loutherbourg, but oftener with feebleness and imbecility, as in Jacob Moore, Hackert, etc.'

Of the Italianising Dutchmen he speaks again with dislike in his second lecture at the Royal Institution, delivered in the last year of his life:—

'Of this School were Both and Berghem, who, by an incongruous mixture

of Dutch and Italian taste, produced a bastard style of landscape, destitute of the real excellence of either. . . . Their art is destitute of sentiment or poetic feeling, because it is factitious, though their works being specious, their reputation is still kept up by the dealers, who continue to sell their pictures for high prices. . . . The deterioration of art has everywhere proceeded from similar causes, the imitation of preceding styles, with little reference to nature.'

Leslie relates that after this lecture one of Constable's hearers, who had a fine collection of pictures, said to him, 'I suppose I had better sell my Berghems?' 'No, sir,' replied the painter, 'that will only continue the mischief; burn them.' By a curious coincidence it is with Berghem that Constable is classed by Mr. Ruskin! (Modern Painters, iii. pp. 131, 132.)

If Constable's condemnation of what was artificial in the art of the past, and of what in that art was due merely to the effect of time, may now and then seem rather sweeping, it is only fair to remember that the current opinion of the cultured public of his age must have been a source of constant provocation to him. Think, for instance, of his kind friend, Sir George Beaumont, recommending the tone of an old violin for the prevailing tone of everything—a suggestion answered by the painter's laying an old violin on the green lawn at Cole-Orton. On another occasion Sir George placed a picture by Gaspar Poussin close to his easel, saying, 'Now, if I can match these tints I am sure to be right.' 'But suppose, Sir George,' replied Constable, 'Gaspar could rise from his grave, do you think he would know his own picture in its present state? Or, if he did, should we not find it difficult to persuade him that somebody had not smeared tar or cart-grease over its surface, and then wiped it imperfectly off?'

The imitation by inferior painters of the discoloration produced by dirt and old age—the yellowing of oils and varnishes, and the darkening of pigments—was especially annoying to Constable. Again and again he refers to the Wardour Street connoisseurship which set a value on such accidents, and neglected the brilliancy of true and natural colouring.

GILLINGHAM MILL, DORSETSHIRE.

About 1827. From the Oil-Vainting at South Kensington.







'T— views me favourably for your sake, and is determined to love painting as an intellectual pursuit of the most delightful kind, in preference to dirt, and old canvas, varnish, etc.'

'— shall have his picture when I can find an opportunity of sending it. Had I not better grime it down with slime and soot, as he is a connoisseur, and perhaps prefers filth and dirt to freshness and beauty?'

'What a sad thing it is that this lovely art is so wrested to its own destruction! Used only to blind our eyes, and prevent us from seeing the sun shine, the fields bloom, the trees blossom, and from hearing the foliage rustle; while old, black, rubbed-out, and dirty canvases take the place of God's own works.'

However emphatic might be Constable's condemnation of the painting which he despised, he was ever ready to express equally frankly his admiration and respect for the great artists of the past. Speaking of Italy, he writes: "Oh dear! oh dear! I shall never let my longing eyes see that famous country!" These are the words of old Richardson, and, like him, I am doomed never to see the living scenes that inspired the landscape of Wilson and Claude. No, but I was born to paint a happier land, my own dear old England; and when I cease to love her, may I, as Wordsworth says,

"Never more hear Her green leaves rustle, or her torrents roar."'

Even the primitive masters did not escape his notice, though their beauties in his day were little known or respected. Near the beginning of his first lecture at the Royal Institution, Constable showed a drawing from the fresco by Paolo Uccello in the cloister of S. Maria Novella, of Noah and his family kneeling round an altar, while the birds and beasts are leaving the ark, the whole arched by the rainbow. So, in speaking of the 'Peter Martyr' of Titian, he mentions that he has a print of an earlier treatment of the subject by that amusing Venetian primitive, Jacobello del Fiore.

His references to the riper masters of painting are more numerous. When Visitor of the Life Academy, the first model he set was an Eve after Raphael; afterwards two male figures from the 'Last Judgment' of

Michelangelo, and three figures from the 'Peter Martyr' of Titian. His analysis of this picture in his lectures at Hampstead and at the Royal Institution should be read *in extenso* to get a clear idea of the thoroughness with which Constable carried out his studies of the great art of the past. After considering at length the alterations introduced by Titian into the composition to heighten the effect he desired to produce, Constable notes:—

'It is striking to observe with what consummate skill the painter, like a great musician, has varied his touch and execution from slow movements to those of extreme rapidity. Thus the quick and vivid sparks of light near and upon the assassin's arm, hand, and sword give inconceivable energy to his action, and contrast finely with the solemn quiet of the retiring forest.'

Where he had not to trust to engravings, his praises are more freely expressed:—

'There is a noble N. Poussin at the Academy, a solemn, deep, still summer's noon, with large umbrageous trees, and a man washing his feet at a fountain near them. Through the breaks in the trees are mountains, and the clouds collecting about them with the most enchanting effects possible. It cannot be too much to say that this landscape is full of religious and moral feeling.'

Of Claude he always speaks with the utmost enthusiasm, though his eye was too keen to overlook that master's occasional weakness.

'There is some hope of the Academy's getting a Claude from Mr. Angerstein's, the large and magnificent marine picture, one of the most perfect in the world; should that be the case, though I can ill afford it, I will make a copy of the same size. A study would only be of value to myself; the other will be property to my children, and a great delight to me. The very doing it will almost bring me into communion with Claude himself.'

'If you (Fisher) have not your book of Claude's etchings at Salisbury, will you procure it?—as it contains his epitaph and some memoranda, and I am engaged to give a sketch of his character to prefix to a book of engravings now making from the National Gallery.'

The above passages occur in correspondence. In his second lecture at the Royal Institution, Constable speaks more plainly:—

'In Claude's landscape all is lovely—all amiable—all is amenity and repose; the calm sunshine of the heart. He carried landscape, indeed, to perfection, that is human perfection. . . . Brightness was the characteristic excellence of Claude; brightness independent of colour; for what colour is there here (holding up a glass of water)? The "St. Ursula" in the National Gallery is probably the finest picture of middle tint in the world. . . . The darks are in the local colours of the foreground figures, and in small spots; yet as a whole it is perfect in breadth. There is no evasion in any part of this admirable work, every object is fairly painted in a firm style of execution, yet in no other picture have I seen the evanescent character of light so well expressed. . . . There are undoubted productions of his pencil, however, so destitute of his distinguishing excellence that it may be said purchasers are not always buying a Claude when they are buying a picture painted by him.'

If Claude was one of Constable's earliest teachers, the influence of Rubens is so marked in some of his large works that it is only natural he should be enthusiastic about the great Flemish master.

'In no other branch of the art is Rubens greater than in landscape; the freshness and dewy light, the joyous and animated character which he has imparted to it, impressing on the level, monotonous scenery of Flanders all the richness which belongs to its noblest features. Rubens delighted in phenomena—rainbows upon a stormy sky, bursts of sunshine, moonlight, meteors, and impetuous torrents mingling their sound with wind and wave.'

'By the rainbow of Rubens I do not allude to a particular picture, for Rubens often introduced it; I mean, indeed, more than the rainbow itself, I mean dewy light and freshness, the departing shower, with the exhilaration of the returning sun (no inapt description of Constable's own special achievement!)—effects which Rubens, more than any other painter, has perfected on canvas.'

'Rembrandt's "Mill" (Lord Lansdowne's picture) is a picture wholly

made by chiaroscuro; the last ray of light just gleams on the upper sail of the mill, and all other details are lost in large and simple masses of shade. Chiaroscuro is the great feature that characterises his art, and was carried farther by him than by any other painter, not excepting Correggio. But if its effects are somewhat exaggerated by Rembrandt, he is always so impressive that we can no more find fault with his style than we can with the giant forms of Michel Angelo. . . . Chiaroscuro is by no means confined to dark pictures; the works of Cuyp, though generally light, are full of it.'

This is his description of a Cuyp at Ham House:-

'There is there a truly sublime Cuyp, still and tranquil; the town of Dort is seen with its tower and windmills under the insidious gleam of a faint watery sun, while a horrid rent in the sky almost frightens one, and the lightning descends to the earth over some poor cottages with a glide that is so much like nature that I wish I had seen it before I sent away my "Salisbury."

Ruysdael, too, whom he had bought and copied as a young man, always retained an interest for him:—

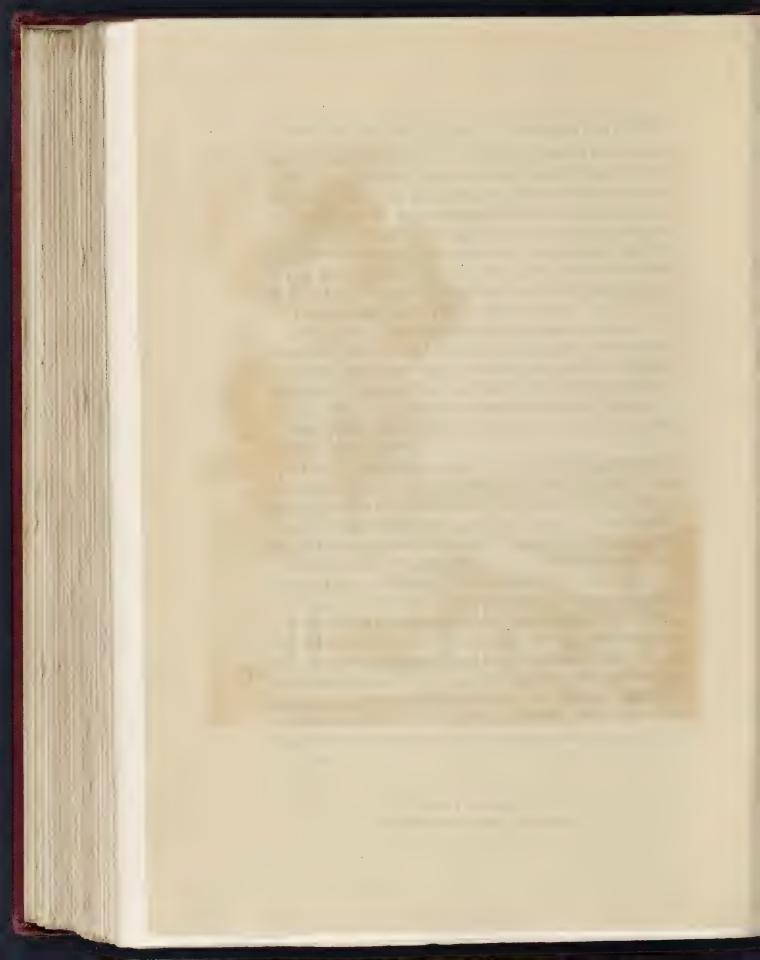
'I have seen an affecting picture this morning (November 28, 1826) by Ruysdael; it haunts my mind, and clings to my heart, and stands between you and me while I am talking to you. It is a watermill; a man and boy are cutting rushes in the running stream (the tail-water); the whole so true, clear, and fresh, and as brisk as champagne; a shower has not long passed.'

And again in the last year of his life he thus describes a small winterpiece by Ruysdael, of which he had made a copy:—

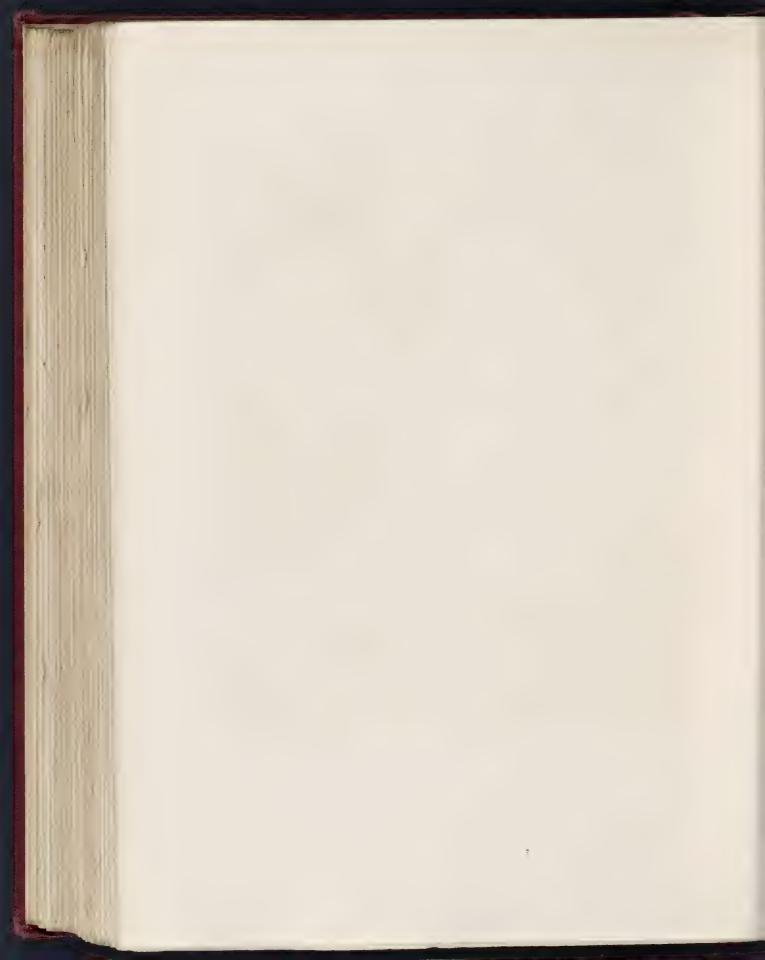
'This picture represents an approaching thaw. The ground is covered with snow, and the trees are still white; but there are two windmills near the centre, the one has the sails furled and is turned in the work, the other has the canvas on the poles, and is turned another way, which indicates a change in the wind; the clouds are opening in that direction, which appears by the glow in the sky to be the south (the sun's winter habitation in our hemisphere), and this change will produce a thaw before morning. The concurrence of these circumstances shows that Ruysdael understood what he was painting.'

DEDHAM VALE.

Exhibited 1828. From the Mezzotint by David Lucas.







The criticism, too, shows that Constable understood what he was talking about, for few but those who have had as much to do with windmills as he had in his youth could have interpreted the picture so practically and so completely.

Of the great English masters of landscape Constable always spoke with the highest respect and admiration, with the single exception of Crome, whose work he does not seem to have known:—

'It is delightful to say that landscape painting revived in our own country, in all its purity, simplicity, and grandeur in the works of Wilson, Gainsborough, Cozens, and Girtin.'

'I went (May 1823) to the gallery of Sir John Leicester to see the English artists. I recollect nothing so much as a large, solemn, bright, warm, fresh landscape by Wilson, which still swims in my brain like a delicious dream. Poor Wilson! think of his fate, think of his magnificence. . . . He was one of those appointed to show the world the hidden stores and beauties of nature.'

'The Gainsborough was down when I was there (at Petworth). I placed it as it suited me, and I cannot think of it even now without tears in my eyes. With particulars he had nothing to do; his object was to deliver a fine sentiment, and he has fully accomplished it. Mind, I use no comparisons in my delight in thinking of this lovely canvas; nothing injures one's mind more than such modes of reasoning; no fine things will bear or want comparisons; every fine thing is unique.'

'I want to know where the younger Cozens was born; his name was John, and he was the greatest genius that ever touched landscape. . . . I want this for my lecture on Monday, to be given at Hampstead.' In his lecture Constable spoke of Cozens and Girtin as possessing genius of the very highest order, though their works being comparatively few, and in water-colours chiefly, they are less known than they deserve to be.

Many years before (1821) he had written to Fisher:-

'In the room where I am writing there are hanging up two beautiful small drawings by Cozens; one a wood, close, and very solemn; the other,

a view from Vesuvius, looking over Portici, very lovely. I borrowed them from my neighbour Mr. Woodburn. Cozens was all poetry, and your drawing is a lovely specimen.'

Constable's references to his great contemporary Turner, so different from him in his life and in his art, are pleasant reading, for they prove him to have been endowed with a breadth of view and a generosity of spirit which are not always combined with strong individuality either in painters or in critics. In 1813 he writes:—

'I dined with the Royal Academy last Monday in the Council Room.

. . . I sat next to Turner, and opposite Mr. West and Lawrence. I was a good deal entertained with Turner. I always expected to find him what I did. He has a wonderful range of mind.'

'Turner (at the Academy of 1828) has some golden visions, glorious and beautiful; they are only visions, but still they are art, and one could live and die with such pictures.'

'I remember (at Petworth) most of Turner's early works, amongst them was one of singular intricacy and beauty; it was a canal, with numerous boats making thousands of beautiful shapes, and I think the most complete work of genius I ever saw.'

'Turner's light, whether it emanates from the sun or moon, is exquisite' (Royal Academy, 1835).

'Turner has outdone himself (Royal Academy, 1836); he seems to paint with tinted steam, so evanescent and so airy. The public think he is laughing at them, and so they laugh at him in return.'

Some apology, perhaps, is due to the reader who has been given such a mass of quotations to deal with. Nevertheless, it would hardly be possible to present Constable's actual thoughts and words so vividly and so truly in any other way. Even by reprinting his lectures at full length one could hardly have revealed the real man so well. In a formal address much has to be suppressed, and everything has to be modified to suit the capacity of a mixed audience. In a private letter to a friend a man is hampered by no

such restrictions. He can express his inmost thoughts freely without fear of being misunderstood or misjudged. For this reason I have preferred where possible to quote scraps from Constable's correspondence, rather than use the more carefully prepared arguments contained in his lectures.

Viewed as a whole, Constable's attitude towards nature and towards art is a fairly simple one. His words and work alike prove him to have been the most sincere, consistent, intelligent, and sympathetic worshipper of natural beauty as revealed in English pastoral scenery who has ever lived. Within the limits such a phrase implies, he is at present without a rival.

The very strength of this passion for nature, while it made him a devoted admirer of all other artists in whom he recognised a kindred spirit, caused him at the same time to be a bitter enemy of those painters who were not primarily lovers of nature, but founded their art only on the works of other men, who were imitators and manufacturers rather than creative artists. The painters in fact whom he despised are those who have always been despised by every one who has been able to appreciate the excellence of the masters who are really great.

To assert that Constable despised all painting because he despised bad painting is utter nonsense. On the contrary, other great artists have not always been as open-minded as he to recognise merit in art which differed entirely from their own. His knowledge of and sympathy with all the great landscape painters of the past are sufficiently indicated by the quotations given above.

That this sympathy was not reserved for landscape painters alone is proved by his respect for the painting and writing of Sir Joshua Reynolds, who might seem to the undiscerning the exact opposite of Constable both as a painter and as a critic. So far did Constable's admiration go, that at the sale of Sir Thomas Lawrence's effects he bought Sir Joshua's palette and presented it to the Academy.

Nor can it be asserted that Constable refused to be taught by the works of his predecessors. When a young man, he wrote, 'I must still fag at copying

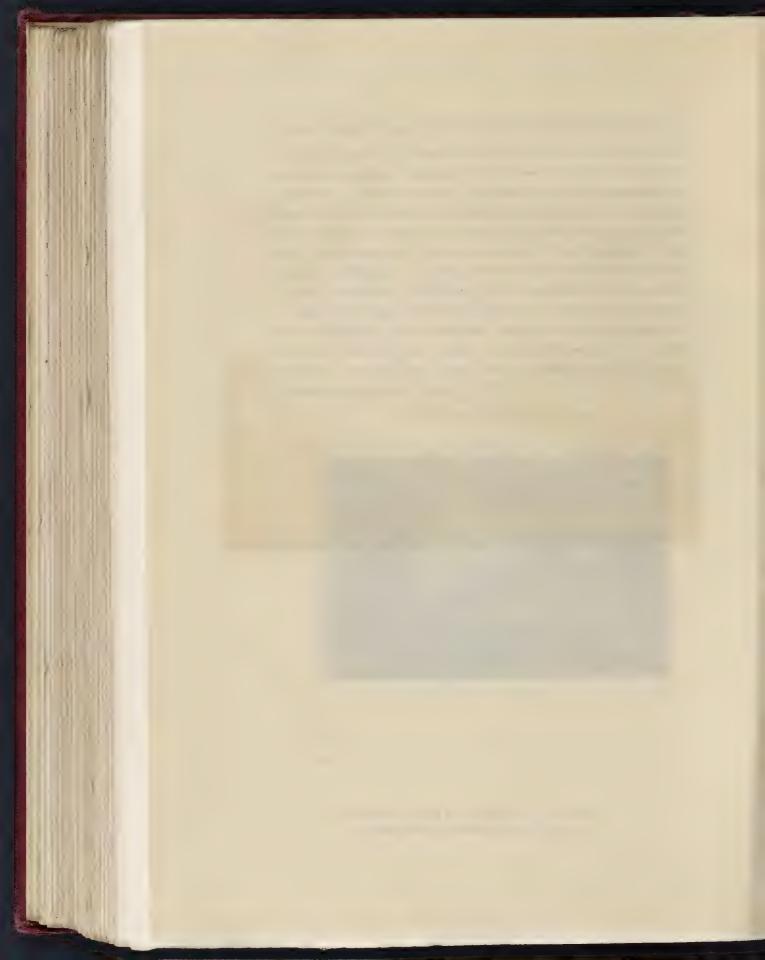
to acquire execution.' In those words lie the secret of his whole attitude towards the painting of other men. Nature was with him the source, the inspiration, and the matter of art; but nature could not be represented by him until he had learned from the painting of other men the proper way of using brushes and paint. As he says in one of his lectures, 'A self-taught artist is one taught by a very ignorant person.' His whole object in art was the revelation of the natural beauty he saw in the meadows round Dedham and Salisbury, or from the hill at Hampstead, but he recognised as clearly as the most academically trained of painters could do that it was impossible for him to effect that revelation till he had learned his craft from those who had worked successfully before him. We shall not be far wrong, in fact, if we sum up Constable's attitude towards painting in the words of Landor:—

'Nature I loved, and, next to Nature, Art.'

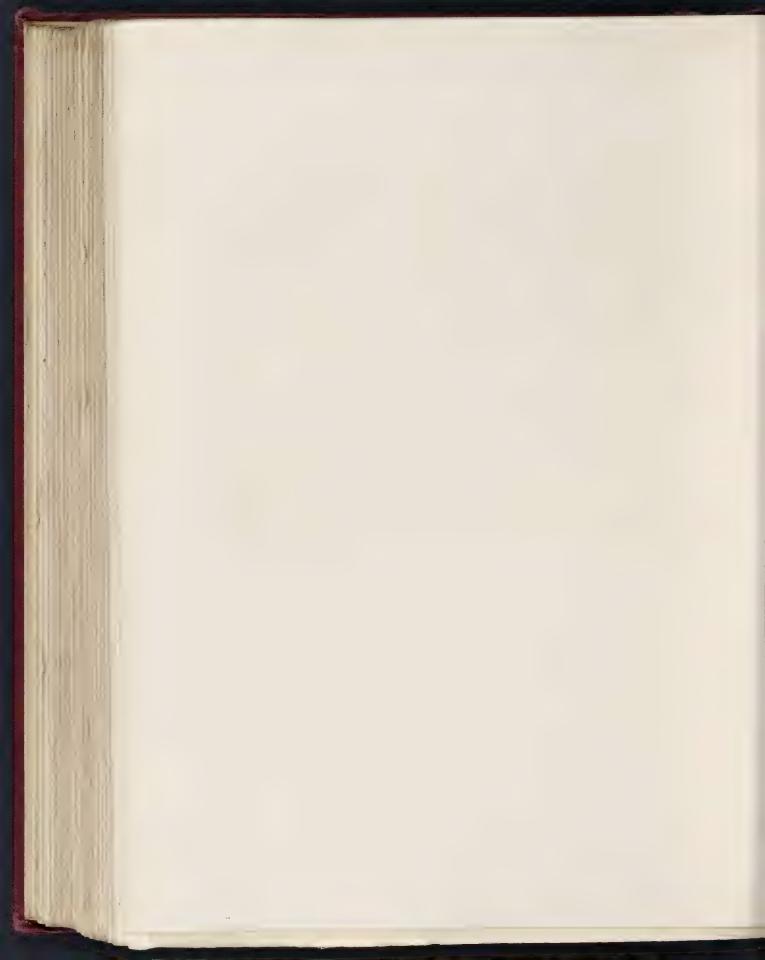


A SUMMER AFTERNOON AFTER A SHOWER.

About 1828. From the Oil-Painting in the National Gallery.









CHAPTER X

CONSTABLE'S PLACE AS AN ARTIST



O try to settle the relative rank of the world's great men is in general an unprofitable business, for it implies the weighing of quantities that can have no common standard. Indirectly, however, it may be of considerable use. Such an effort, in any particular case, will at least force the mind to realise more or less distinctly the aims, the

character, and the value of some single man's work; not so much by any giving of marks on some arbitrary scale for points of excellence, in the manner of an examiner, as by enabling us to recognise what precise personal elements of novelty were introduced by the man in question into the art which he practised, and to estimate the value of these elements.

Though the study of painting may be resolved into separate studies of its subject-matter and of its technique—the manner in which that subject-matter is handled—the highest excellences of the art, as in literature or music, depend

161

upon neither of these branches, but upon the inventive, the creative faculty, which combines and controls them both. Michelangelo and Rembrandt are not among the greatest of artists only because they think deeply, or because they draw magnificently. Their true supremacy lies in their power of creative design, which can at once conceive an idea and provide it by the same act of the intellect with its perfect pictorial incarnation. However much a painter may interest or attract us by his powers as a thinker or as a technician, we must always remember that his rank as an artist is finally determined by his achievement as a creative designer.

Let us first deal with Constable as a thinker, and ask ourselves what is the prevailing character of the subject-matter of his painting. Putting aside the experiments of his youth, Constable's work consists almost entirely of landscapes or sketches made in four districts—the meadows round Dedham, the meadows round Salisbury, the beach at Brighton, and the suburban scenery of Hampstead. His first characteristic, then, is narrowness. No painter of similar reputation has ever restricted himself to so limited a range of subject-matter, has been so provincial, nay, so local.

This narrowness is the more marked because Constable does not even paint his chosen places under every aspect of weather and season. With the exception of 'The Cenotaph,' 'Helmingham Park,' and perhaps 'The Valley Farm,' I can recollect only a few sketches which recall autumn, none at all which recall winter. He himself says in one of his letters, 'I never did admire the autumnal tints, even in nature, so little of a painter am I in the eye of commonplace connoisseurship. I love the exhilarating freshness of spring.'

It is hardly necessary to say what a vast number of noble natural effects were thus excluded from his canvas. Setting aside the ordinary aspects of a bright autumn afternoon, which even the half-trained amateur can render with a modest degree of success, how many moments are there not in the waning of the year which can stir the emotions almost as powerfully as the silence, the rare sunshine, or the invincible desolation of winter? Even Constable's admiration for 'the exhilarating freshness of spring' is not often

reflected in his work. Two or three sketches of showery afternoons I can remember, which might perhaps have been made in the early part of the year, but, as a rule, it is summer and summer only that he paints. He draws the poplar often, but never, to my knowledge, except in full foliage. So far as his sketches and pictures go, he might never have seen its golden buds in May. June, perhaps, was his favourite month, though the heavier colouring of July, August, and September is a very common feature of his work.

Even the time of day that he chooses is limited. It is hard to recall more than a sketch or two of his which could not have been made after an early breakfast, or within a quarter of an hour of sunset. The exquisite grays of a misty morning which Turner was the first to paint consistently, and which Corot afterwards treated with such perfection, are as rare in Constable's work as the mysterious dignity of nightfall, on which one or two of his modern followers so wisely rely. Constable's usual hours of work were in fact like those of a modern man of business—from ten to six.

Here, it is true, Constable's limitations as a realist end. If he only painted in three or four places, at one season of the year, and in the middle of the day, he at least did his work thoroughly. Every sketch of his in the meadows, at Brighton, or at Hampstead, conveys an exact impression of the real place, not only of the position of the trees and lanes, and hedges and cottages, but of the weather, the wind, the hour of the day, the people, the birds or the beasts that haunt the place, and the work going on around. Every sketch, in fact, shows an intimate knowledge and observation of the matter in hand—an observation possible only for one who had lived among such scenes. This, in spite of all the labour of the Dutchmen, was really a new thing in art.

Constable only paints the summer—the English summer—but has any other painter ever caught its exact character, its breezes, its heat, its heavy colouring, so marvellously? Constable only paints from ten to six, but has any other painter ever left a series of works which might be made into so complete a catalogue of the atmospheric effects visible in southern England

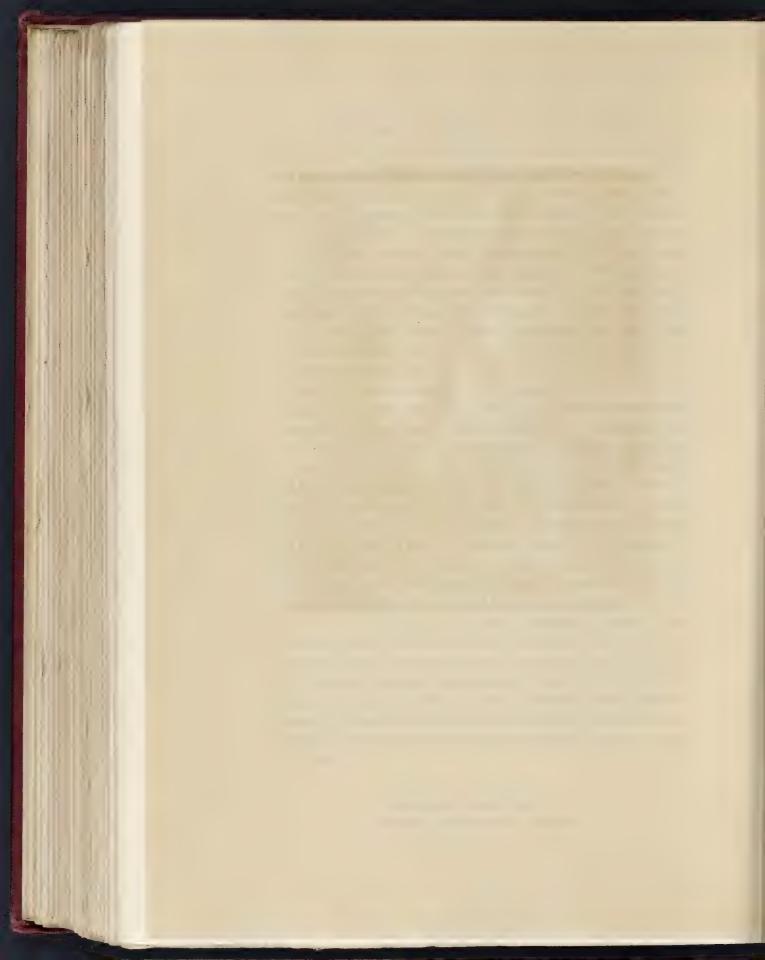
between those hours? Certainly Turner, for all that Mr. Ruskin may have said to the contrary, for all his amazing gifts, never did so. Though Turner paints storms magnificently, though he suggests the blazing heat of noonday better than any other artist, though he is master alike of the heavy cumulus and the drifting raincloud, his real preference is usually for the glowing hues of the sunset, and more rarely for the calmer tones of the dawn. In the sketches of Constable we find the ordinary clouds we see in the daytime in summer painted with a completeness and frankness that make them appear almost real. If the blue of the sky is chalky or garish, if the clouds are leaden or purple, if the light is hard or broken, Constable will hardly yield a jot to preconceived theories of harmony, but gives the actual fact, inharmonious or unpleasant though it be.

Those who for one reason or another are habitually accustomed to be observers of the weather must have recognised the enormous difference that locality makes in the forms and ordering of the clouds. The drifting mist that a west wind carries with it from the Atlantic has taken definite shape by the time that it has come to the midlands, and on reaching the east coast, and if it has not already fallen in rain, will be gathered into still more massive forms. The sea-fog that is carried landward from the North Sea is broken into woolly masses before it has travelled five miles from the coast, and in the course of the next ten miles is already soaring aloft as a veritable if loose and straggling cloud. To the observer of the sky, each district has thus its own particular set of atmospheric conditions, as distinct, perhaps, from those of the next county as its flora and fauna and geology may be.

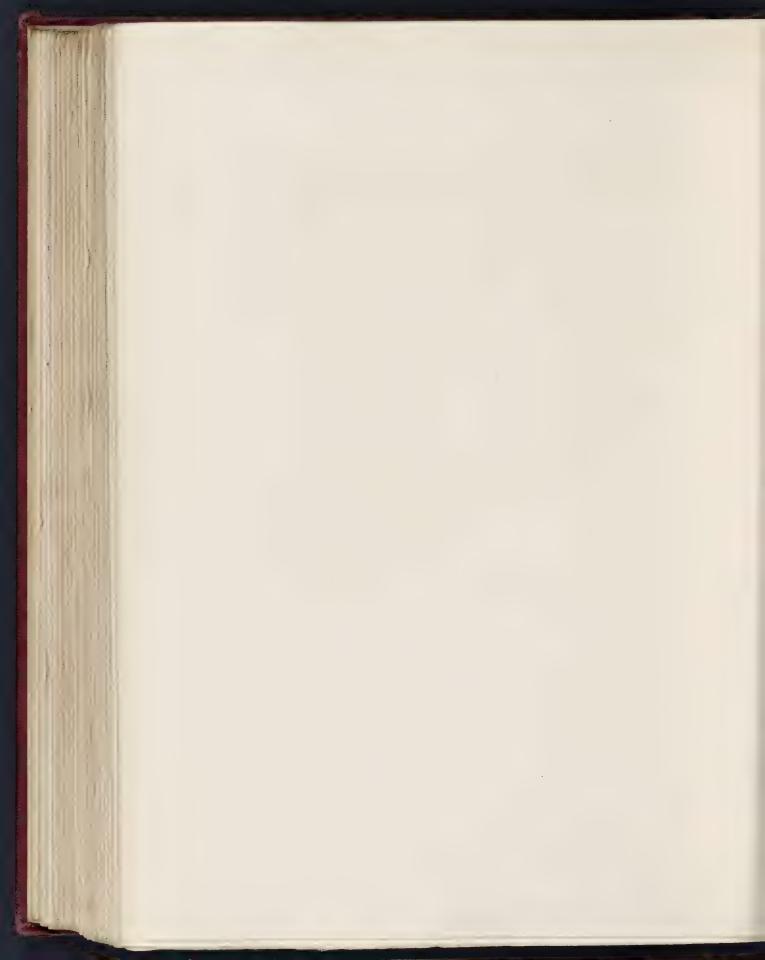
To such a trained eye it will at once be evident that Constable, by his unflinching accuracy in sky-painting, fixes not only the day and the hour of his sketch, but the atmospheric conditions of the district in which he made it. The work of previous landscape painters almost always is a general statement of twilight or noonday, of spring or autumn, of storm or cloud or sunshine. The alteration of a few details in the buildings or figures introduced would alter the *mise-en-scène* from Holland or Flanders to England, or from

A MILL NEAR BRIGHTON.

About 1828. From the Oil-Painting at South Kensington.







England to Italy. Constable was the first painter who painted individual places, giving not only their obvious fixed features, their hills, their buildings, and their trees, but bathing all in the actual atmosphere peculiar to the place and found nowhere else.

The peculiar intimacy, the sense of locality, of familiarity brought into art by this particular phase of Constable's painting, is undoubtedly of the highest value. It conveys as nothing else can do a feeling of reality in the search for which painters have been compelled to have recourse to devices which, in comparison, are only tricks—the devoting of special attention to some little incident, some amusing piece of by-play, or the dragging in of some more ponderous and obvious document, a piece of architecture or a costume, to fix the attention of the careless spectator.

The one danger of such intimacy is that at times it may come into contact with beauty. Truth, no doubt, is a very beautiful thing, but there are times when its revelation may be inopportune. This danger Constable on the whole evades fairly well. His training in the School of the Old Masters taught him to work on a monochrome foundation, in itself no mean assistance to general harmony of tone and colour, and his natural taste led him by preference to choose effects which were perhaps brighter and more gay than strict harmony would allow, but yet were not positively crude or garish. The effect of his example on the less thoroughly trained, less well-balanced minds of his successors has not been entirely harmless. Wishing to strike hard on the note of intimacy, they are apt at times to choose subjects which are themselves violent in colour or in tone, so that they may have an opportunity of emphasising their intention in a manner that cannot fail to catch even the dullest sense.

In a general way, then, it may be fairly said that Constable was not only the first man who ever painted the peculiar character of the scenery of the English midlands, who caught its greenness, its freshness, and its moisture, who noted the peculiar character of its heavy elms, its silvery willows, and quiet, weedy waters breaking here and there into ripples and foam that suggest

a faint hope to the angler of some bulky unsuspected trout, as well as the shape and form and colour of its clouds and the direction and force of the prevalent winds. Not only did Constable give us all this on canvas for the first time, but he also gave it us more skilfully, more harmoniously, more beautifully, than any one else has done since.

His studies of the sea are more occasional, but even there his fearlessness and sincerity stand him in good stead, making him the first modern marine painter—that is to say, the first who painted the real *colour* of the sea—just as he is the first modern painter of the land. Others, however, have in this department of painting followed so bravely and skilfully in his footsteps, that Constable must, so far as sea painting is concerned, be content to share his glory with them.

As the first painter of the suburbs his position is stronger, although his followers number among them some of the greatest names of the nineteenth century. There are evidences among the drawings, and more rarely among the paintings, of the Old Masters, that they were not blind to the charming combination of buildings with foliage found outside most large towns. As motives for serious painting, however, these were usually deemed inadequate, unless the buildings could be dignified into ruins and the trees made to group themselves with strict classical propriety. In Constable's sketches round Hampstead there is none of this idealising. There the suburban house stands just as it is, with all its slates and windows and plaster and chimneypots, and the trees around it are the real trees that grow in many a town garden, but the whole is transformed into fresh and vigorous art by the skill with which the stiff architectural lines are balanced by the more pliant masses of greenery, while some carefully noted flash of light on a white wall or a cloud supplies the needful note of animation. The fixity of the lines and masses dealt with introduces a new element of formal caprice into the composition, so that as designs these little paintings are among the most striking and original of Constable's achievements. In dealing with pastoral landscape he is apt to be biassed in his arrangement and treatment by a recollection of

the formal compositions of the masters he had studied, in spite of his avowed practice. 'When I sit down to make a sketch from nature, the first thing I try to do is to forget that I have ever seen a picture.' Claude, however, could provide him with no formula for making pictures out of suburban villas, so that from this class of Constable's sketches we can judge how considerable his natural power of design might really have been had he developed it.

The novelty of Constable's subject-matter makes his technique so entirely different in many ways from that of his predecessors, that it is difficult to institute any comparison between his work and theirs. As a draughtsman, at least, he cannot stand comparison with the great masters of the past. Though his drawing is rarely inadequate, and often exceedingly skilful, there is no evidence in his work that he possessed the true draughtsman's love of drawing for the sake of drawing. His sketches in black and white, for instance, are in their several ways most excellent practical memoranda, but they are not intended to be anything more—to be beautiful things in themselves—being almost always executed in that most convenient but least artistic of mediums, lead pencil on white paper.

It is unjust, however, to attach much importance to these pencil drawings in forming a general estimate of Constable's powers. Their not infrequent lack of outward charm may argue a certain insensibility to beauty of material in their maker, but it should always be remembered that Constable did not intend them to be more than notes of facts and effects to be executed in another medium, and that therefore their original purpose was not beauty but usefulness. They must therefore be judged by that purpose alone, and cannot be fairly compared with deliberate works of art like the landscape drawings of Gainsborough.

It would be more reasonable to compare these pencil studies with the jottings in some of Turner's notebooks. The difference between the two men would then at once be evident. Turner draws with an audacious summary ease that would be insolent were the drawings meant for any other eye than his own, while in Constable's work there is a certain element of literalness

that makes him look rather slow, common-place, and prosy by the side of his brilliant contemporary.

When using his favourite tool, the brush, Constable is less at a disadvantage. He cannot, certainly, attain to those brilliant feats of execution which make the 'Calais Pier' not only one of the most impressive, but also one of the most consummately painted pictures in existence. His aim is something very different. Turner draws like an Old Master, thinking all the time of uniting fact—that is to say, outward form, texture, and structure with style. Constable in his drawing seeks to unite form—or as much of it as he can get-with freedom and motion. In looking at a tree by Turner we admire its mass, its strength, its grace; in looking at a tree by Constable we may feel its mass, its strength, and its grace, but the predominant impression left upon us is that the tree is a living thing, with boughs that are accustomed to sweep to and fro in the wind. The same holds good with regard to Constable's drawing of clouds and water: his clouds toss and drift, his water sparkles and gushes with all the animation of reality. The drawing that can express this inward vitality cannot be entirely bad drawing; for in figure painting we have to go to men at least of the rank of Gainsborough before we get it. At the same time it is undeniable that the great masters of drawing have a delicacy of hand which Constable did not possess, so that, when every allowance is made for the different functions of draughtsmanship in landscape and in figure painting, he cannot be classed with them. He was undoubtedly a draughtsman of very great frankness, force, spirit, and originality, but one has only to think of him for a moment in comparison with his great forerunner Rubens, to recognise what an impassable gulf separates the master from the pupil. Nevertheless, if Constable had done no more than reiterate the truth, which is always in danger of being forgotten, that drawing is not a static thing, a mere matter of measurable feet and inches and proportions, he would at least have deserved our gratitude. By doing so much more than that, he has, as a draughtsman, a very distinct claim on our admiration.

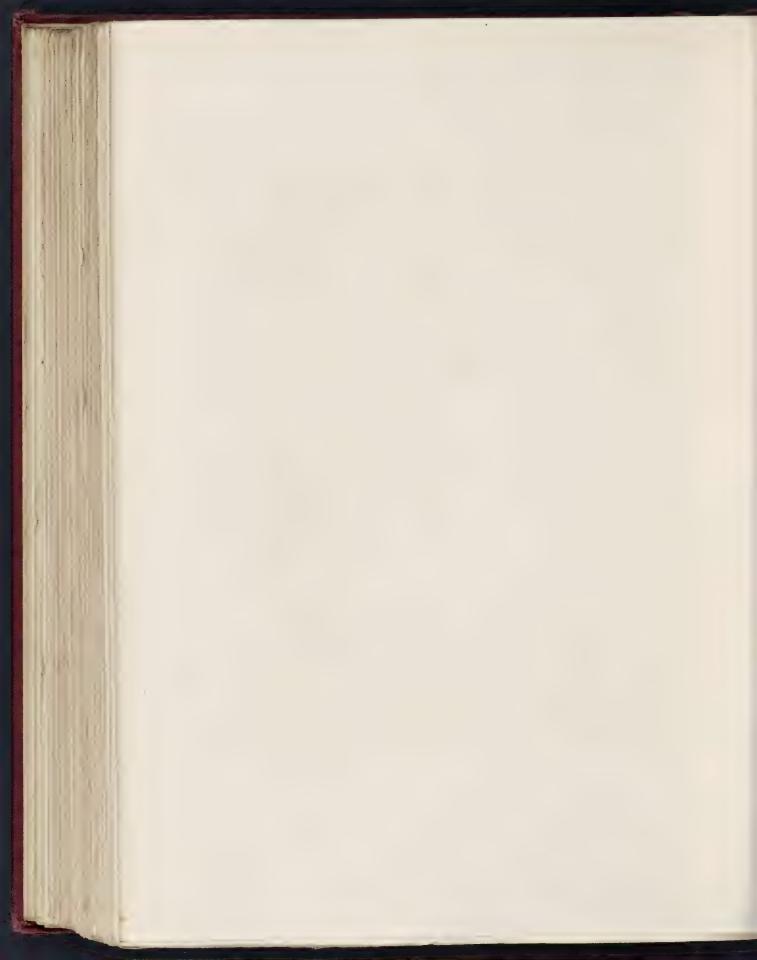
As a colourist, Constable's position is peculiar. His sincerity and honesty 168

HAMPSTEAD HEATH.

Exhibited 1830. From the Oil-Painting at South Kensington.







compelled him to take nature's colour as he saw it, and to do his best to interpret it without alteration on canvas. His habit both of sketching and painting pictures on a monochrome foundation was useful in preserving a certain amount of unity between his pigments. Thus even the most violent contrasts of natural colour could be represented without producing a positively garish effect, while oppositions which in nature were merely sharp were toned almost into harmony. Nevertheless, as his colour was intended to be a close imitation of natural colour, it is only harmonious when nature herself was moderately harmonious—and therefore varies in merit very much. Sometimes the clash of bright greens, vermilion, ultramarine, sharp purples, or dazzling whites is almost painful, and shows that Constable was lacking to some extent in that exquisite sense of proportion and delicacy which has characterised every great colourist. Colour in its profoundest, most subtle, and most splendid manifestations is, whatever relation it may have to nature, a highly complex and deliberate form of art, controlled by rules, not hitherto generally acknowledged, perhaps, certainly not yet written down, but still rules definite enough to enable those who know them to produce perfect schemes of colour time after time with certainty.

This certainty of producing fine colour Constable did not, and from the bent of his mind could not, possess. A frank realism such as his was incompatible with the deliberate selection, arrangement, and contrivance which the great colourist must exercise. Nevertheless, in his fortunate sketches, Constable produces colour that is exceedingly beautiful and exceedingly original. The fresh green of grass and trees had really never been seen in painting before his time, except in small portions of certain primitive pictures. Constable showed how a whole picture might be painted practically in the key of this newly found colour. His skies, too, while natural in hue and forcible in tone, have a peculiar luminosity and brilliancy which were previously unknown to art. The absence, or comparative absence, of the all-pervading brown of the Old Masters gives his work a peculiar clearness, brightness, and gaiety which to many will more than atone for the frequent lack of quality in the tints

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themselves, and of order in their grouping, which is fatal to any claim that might be made on Constable's behalf as a great colourist. Nevertheless, his achievement as a whole contains so many examples of brilliant, harmonious, and original colouring, that one cannot help feeling that Constable, if not a great colourist, is usually a most interesting one.

Those who have only a casual acquaintance with Constable's art are apt to misjudge his technical powers. Because so much of his work is excessively loose in handling, because he uses the palette knife recklessly, because in his late paintings form is often sacrificed to get freshness and brilliancy, it is not unnatural to think of him as a slapdash amateur muddling along anyhow to gain his peculiar ends.

This was far from being the case, as those who have had the patience to read his story so far will recognise. Constable's earliest teachers were the paintings of the Old Masters, and he continued to study them all his life. Many of the pictures executed in his early manhood are absolutely identical in technique with those of his great predecessors—that is to say, the shadows are laid in with transparent brown, and the local colour is painted into them, the touches growing more and more solid as they approach the light. Curiously enough, though Constable in his writings talks of Claude, and Ruysdael, and Cuyp, his art reminds one of the more transparent and more forcible painting of Rubens and Rembrandt.

In his sketches, which were usually painted on reddish mill-boards, the strong colour of the ground served alone, often enough, to pull his compositions together. The parts of a large picture had to be united by a stronger bond. Constable accordingly adopted a foundation of rich brown, in the manner of Rubens, so that the whole composition existed in chiaroscuro before the real colouring was begun. The forcible impasto, and the parts with the palette knife with which the lights are emphasised, were probably suggested by the practice of Rembrandt.

Constable's technique, then, is in a general way the technique of the Old Masters. His critics, however, are apt, I think, to overlook the amazing

variety of his handling. In his determination to get the texture, the local colour, and the luminosity of the things he saw, were they stumps or stones or earth or water or grass or foliage or skies, Constable was compelled to adopt a technique of the most elaborate kind, in which the usual devices of scumbling and glazing are used with remarkable skill and invention. The result is not always pleasant to the eye, sometimes it is far from being so, but the desired effect is gained, and until some other painter shows us a more simple and perfect way of interpreting the effects of glittering sunshine which Constable studied, we must be content to regard Constable's method as the best for his particular purpose. We may of course say that he lacked taste of the highest kind, but no painter who thoroughly understands his business can honestly accuse him of want of skill.

That Constable himself realised the difficulties he had to face in opening up new ground is evident from his correspondence. Speaking of sky painting, for instance, he says in 1821:—

'I have done a good deal of skying, for I am determined to conquer all difficulties, and that among the rest. . . . The landscape painter who does not make his skies a very material part of his composition neglects to avail himself of one of his greatest aids. Sir Joshua Reynolds, speaking of the landscapes of Titian, of Salvator, and of Claude, says: "Even their skies seem to sympathise with their subjects." I have often been advised to consider my sky as "a white sheet thrown behind the objects." Certainly, if the sky is obtrusive, as mine are, it is bad; but if it is evaded, as mine are not, it is worse; it must and always shall with me make an effectual part of the composition. It will be difficult to name a class of landscape in which the sky is not the keynote, the standard of scale, and the chief organ of sentiment. You may conceive, then, what a "white sheet" would do for me, impressed as I am with these notions, and they cannot be erroneous. The sky is the source of light in nature, and governs everything; even our common observations on the weather of every day are altogether suggested by it. The difficulty of skies in painting is very great, both as to composition and execution; because, with all

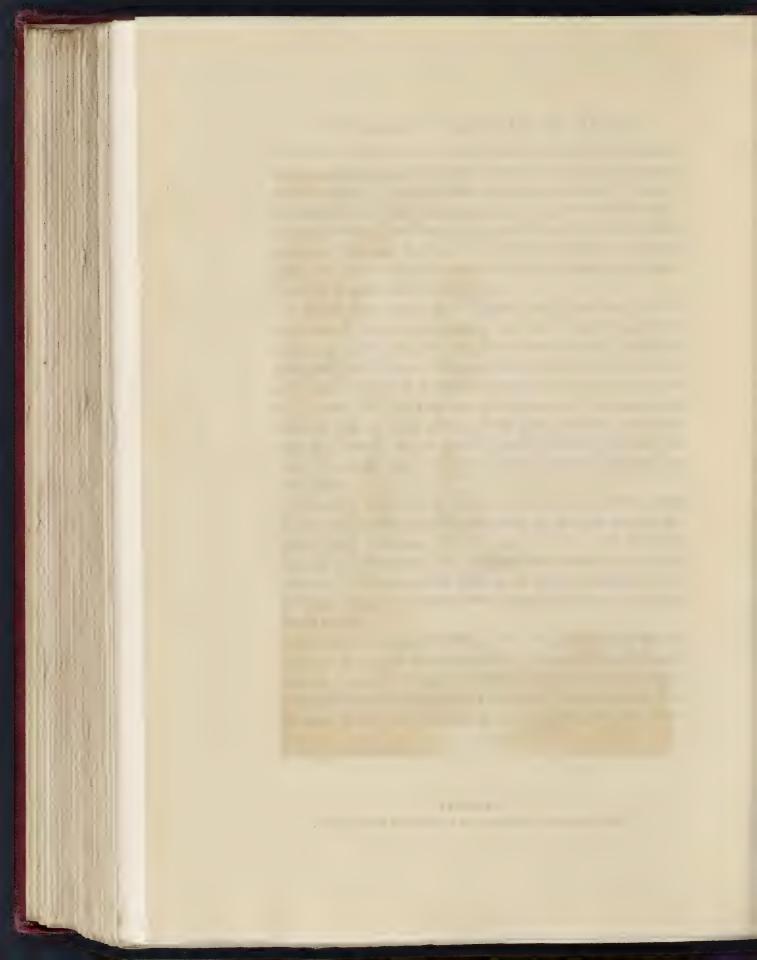
their brilliancy, they ought not to come forward, or, indeed, be hardly thought of any more than extreme distances are; but this does not apply to phenomena or accidental effects of sky, because they always attract particularly. I may say all this to you (Archdeacon Fisher), because you do not want to be told that I know very well what I am about, and that my skies have not been neglected, though they have often failed in execution, no doubt from an over-anxiety about them, which will alone destroy that easy appearance which nature always has in all her movements.'

To over-anxiety, indeed, about brightness, motion, and texture, the one great fault of Constable's technique is due. In striving for quality he ceases to draw with the brush, his touch becomes shapeless, though not meaningless, and he paints with dabs and spots and blocks and blots and scratches, instead of the definite, purposeful stroke of a great master of the brush. All his knowledge of chiaroscuro, all his glazing and scumbling with which he finishes, cannot make his later pictures look really well painted: they are brilliant, forcible, skilful, and original, but they have not the serene, shapely simplicity of the finest work, and can never have it.

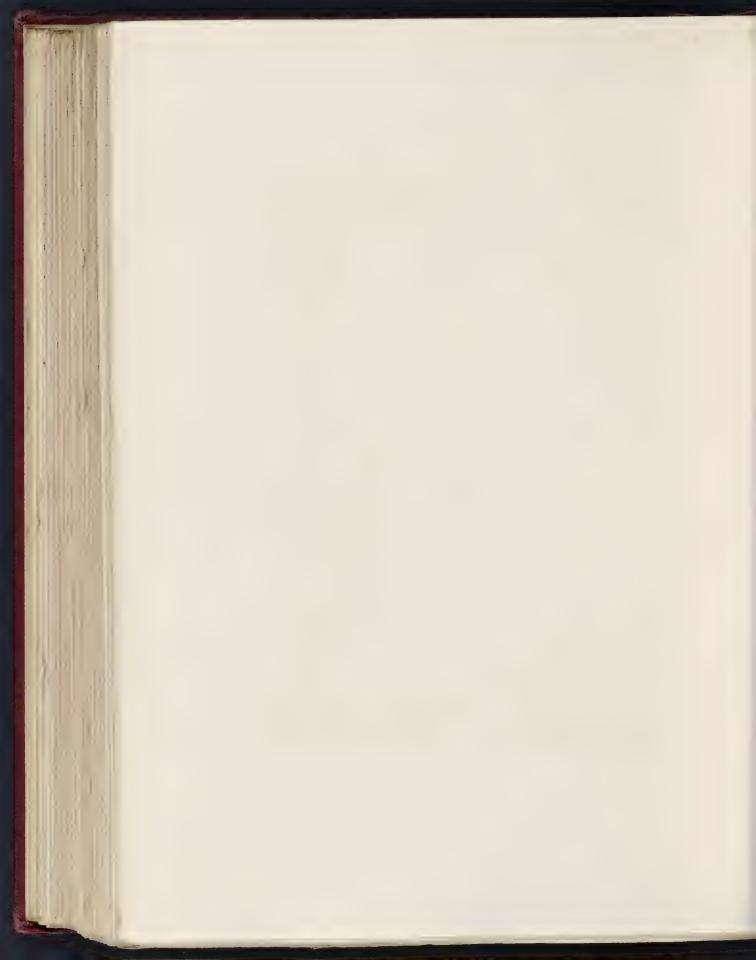
Constable's water-colour sketches are usually fresh and forcible, though the resources of the medium do not permit of the same strength and solidity which characterises his best studies in oil. Like his pencil drawings, his water-colours were generally only intended to be hasty memoranda, yet they contain so much of his spirit as to entitle them to a far higher place in the English Water-Colour School than is commonly allotted to them.

Constable's experiments in etching were less successful, and their ill-success is not due only to failure in biting. The actual workmanship, for some reason or other, is singularly hesitating and inefficient, and they must be regarded as mere experiments in a medium for which the painter, if we may judge by the rarity of the prints themselves, quickly realised that he was unfitted.

SALISBURY. Study for the large picture. About 1830. From the Oil-Painting in the National Gallery.







Finally we must consider Constable's place as a creative designer. We have seen how he practically invented a new way of seeing nature, a new style of drawing, and a new style of colouring, with new technical devices to match. Was he also the inventor of new schemes of pictorial design? Did he also arrange the subject-matter of his pictures in a new way?

Constable's consistent use of the sky as a definite compositional quality was certainly a most desirable novelty in his time, but it had been so used by several of his great predecessors, notably by Rembrandt. The arrangement of his work is almost always sound, usually forcible, and not infrequently grand enough, as in 'The Rainbow' or 'The Leaping Horse,' to hold its own by the side of the compositions of any other master of landscape. Nevertheless there is little in the design of his larger works that can be positively asserted to be actually his invention. His pictures are really built up on plans which, in their main features, have been the common property of all artists since the middle of the sixteenth century. Constable uses these plans sensibly, originally, and powerfully, but he did not invent them.

Possibly the desirability, from a practical point of view, of painting large pictures for exhibition had something to do with this conservatism. Constable always seems to have had great difficulty with this kind of work, so that it is only natural, perhaps, that he should have hesitated to increase his difficulties still further by adding experiments in design to the numerous other experiments he was making.

However this may have been, his most novel and original designs occur in his sketches: though even there Constable's powers vary immensely. The action of his designing faculties, indeed, like that of his colour sense, seems to have been so intermittent as to give his successes almost the appearance of accidents. Such a suspicion is only increased when we notice that the most grandly spaced of the sketches were rarely or never expanded into pictures. With an artist who possessed the designing faculty in a supreme degree such neglect would be impossible.

Design, after all, is not a mere matter of technique—of arranging things in a more or less agreeable way—stereotyped by tradition and generally accepted and recognised by the cultured public. The reason that all the greatest artists have attached such supreme importance to design is that they have recognised it as the real foundation of all artistic emphasis: the means by which an artist says just what he wants to say in the most perfect, concise, and forcible way.

Now Constable never seems to have quite grasped this fact. His attitude towards his work is like that of the average British traveller as opposed to the more methodical researches of a German savant. He plunges boldly enough into the unknown, notes an interesting fact here, another there, and by his very audacity, his carelessness, and his self-reliance covers far more ground and collects far more new species than his more deliberate rival. The published account of his travels is thus sure to be entertaining reading, full of adventure, failures, and successes, but as a lasting contribution to knowledge it will probably have less permanent value than the duller and narrower, but better arranged, more concentrated, and more thorough work of the Teuton.

We might take Constable's large picture of 'The Haywain' in the National Gallery as an example. What is the main thing that the picture is intended to emphasise? Is it Willy Lott's cottage and the trees by it? If so we might cut off the right-hand half of the picture without loss. Is it the expanse of distant fields with the clouds drifting over them? If so we might equally well omit the left half of the picture. The incident in the foreground, from which the work takes its present name, is carefully painted, but would show to better advantage if treated with less importunate facts all round it. Consider the picture carefully, and you will recognise that it emphasises nothing at all. It is merely an aggregate of circumstances which suggest pleasant summer weather. Now pleasant summer weather is a good thing in its way, but by itself it is hardly calculated to excite emotions worthy of a six-foot canvas, and could quite well have been expressed within

the space of a few inches—as Constable has so often expressed it in his sketches. This lack of proportion of thought to scale, this diverting of the attention by details that are really irrelevant, this tendency to all-round compromise, instead of concentrated emphasis on some single fact, explains why Constable is not a great designer. The masses of the picture in question are not badly arranged, as the large sketch at South Kensington proves so triumphantly. A great artist could easily make a fine design out of them without any material change by simply employing them to express one single important fact, instead of making them a cloak for a number of minor facts as they at present are.

Constable, in fact, was essentially an interpreter—a sincere, studious, unflinching interpreter—rather than a creator. In an age whose ideals were absolutely opposed to his own, and in the face of continued discouragement, he applied himself to thoroughly mastering the character, aspect, and colour of one particular kind of English landscape, and succeeded in that aim better than any one else has done since. The translation of this subject-matter into paint caused him to modify very considerably the traditional methods of working, and his example has had an enormous influence upon the technique of his successors. The originality of this achievement, and the remarkable manner in which it anticipated the sympathies of succeeding generations, perhaps constitute his best claim to our respect.

Though his work is extremely interesting from its novelty and sincerity, and is not infrequently powerful and impressive when interpreting effects of wind and storm, it is narrowed by one very serious limitation. As a designer, Constable holds to the last a point of view which was practically that of Claude and Ruysdael. He varied their formulæ adroitly, but as a rule was content to go no further. Thus, when estimating his rank among the world's masters, it is clear that he cannot be placed with those gifted beings whose every act was creation.

Nevertheless, if a man's influence on others is to count for anything, if a man has been the pioneer of a great revolution, posterity when brought

face to face with the large results of his energy, is quite justly in the habit of laying but little stress on minor flaws in character or talent. So, while stern logic must deny Constable a place among the giant intellects of the human race, even hostile criticism must admit him to be one of the most important factors, whether for good or evil, in the whole history of painting. Such a reputation is almost enough in itself to constitute greatness.



SALISBURY CATHEDRAL FROM THE MEADOWS.

Exhibited 1831. From the Mezzotint by David Lucas.



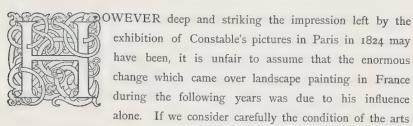






CHAPTER XI

CONSTABLE'S SUCCESSORS ON THE CONTINENT



on the Continent during the second decade of the nineteenth century, we shall see that revolution was already in the air, and the exhibition of Constable's pictures, however far it may have determined the course of the new movement, was only one of several agents that precipitated the crisis.

Though usually associated with the political and social upheaval in France during the Napoleonic epoch, the first symptoms of revolt against the restraints of a stereotyped classical convention had appeared much earlier in England.

The effort of Hogarth was more or less isolated. The preaching of J.-J. Rousseau on the Continent appealed to a wider audience, and the seeds of naturalism in art and letters were sown in France long before the close of the eighteenth century. One sees signs of the new growth in the painting of Chardin, in *Manon Lescaut*, in the battle over the reforms of Glück, but most definitely, perhaps, in the writings of Diderot. All such ideas, however, were driven out of men's minds by the advent of the Reign of Terror, with its empty mimicries of republican Rome.

The outburst of artistic genius in England during the eighteenth century has already been described. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the advance initiated in painting by Reynolds and Gainsborough was continued in literature by Scott and Byron, by Keats and Shelley, by Wordsworth and Coleridge. Of these Scott and Byron were the most important in their immediate effect upon the public taste. That effect has been most admirably summed up by Mr. W. E. Henley:—

'I think it may fairly be said that the master forces of the Romantic revival in England were Scott and Byron. They were the vulgarisers (as it were) of its most human and popular tendencies, and it is scarce possible to exaggerate the importance of the part they bore in its evolution. In their faults and in their virtues each was representative of one or other of the two main tendencies of his time. With his passion for what is honourably immortal in the past, his immense and vivid instinct of the picturesque, his abounding and infallible sense of the eternal realities of life, Scott was an incarnation of chivalrous and manly duty: while Byron with his swaggering cynicism, his passionate regard for passion, his abnormal capacity of defiance, and that overbearing and triumphant individuality which made him, as has been said, one of the greatest elemental forces in literature-Byron was the very genius of revolt. Each in his way became an European influence, and between them they made Romanticism in France. . . . As in England, the first in the field was Scott. When he attended the Congress of Paris in 1815 the fame of his verse had preceded him; his novels

were freely imitated during the early Restoration; he was speedily accessible (1816-36) in translations—by Martin, Pichot, and Defauconpret—of which some fourteen hundred thousand volumes were sold in his lifetime alone. His generous and abounding influence was felt, indeed, with equal force by the average reader and the pensive poet. To say nothing of Cromwell, which may well be referable in some sort to Les Puritains d'Écosse (which is, being interpreted, Old Mortality), one of Hugo's first attempts in drama was an Amy Robsart, written in collaboration with Paul Foucher; Op. 1. of Berlioz is a Waverley overture; subjects from Ivanhoe and Quentin Durward occur with delightful frequency in the catalogue of Delacroix; the origin of such notable departures in romantic prose as Notre Dame, the Chronique de Charles IX., and Isabelle de Bavière, and of such achievements in romantic verse as the Pas d'Armes du Roi Jean, is patent. Scott indeed was responsible for the historical element in Romanticism. . . . Byron is pre-eminently a young men's poet; and upon the heroic days of 1830-greedy of emotion, intolerant of restraint, contemptuous of reticence and sobriety, sick with hatred of the platitudes of the official convention, and prepared to welcome as a return to truth and nature inventions the most extravagant and imaginings the most fantastic and far-fetched-his effect was little short of maddening. He was fully translated as early as 1819-20; and the modern element in Romanticism -that absurd and curious combination of vulgarity and terror, cynicism and passion, truculence and indecency, extreme bad-heartedness and preposterous self-sacrifice—is mainly his work. You find him in Dumas's plays, in Musset's verse, in the music of Berlioz, the pictures of Delacroix, the novels of George Sand. He is the origin of Antony and Rolla, of Indiana and the Massacre de Scio, of Berlioz's Lélio, and Frédérick's Macaire, as Scott is that of Bragelonne and the Croisés à Constantinople, and Michelet's immortal history.'

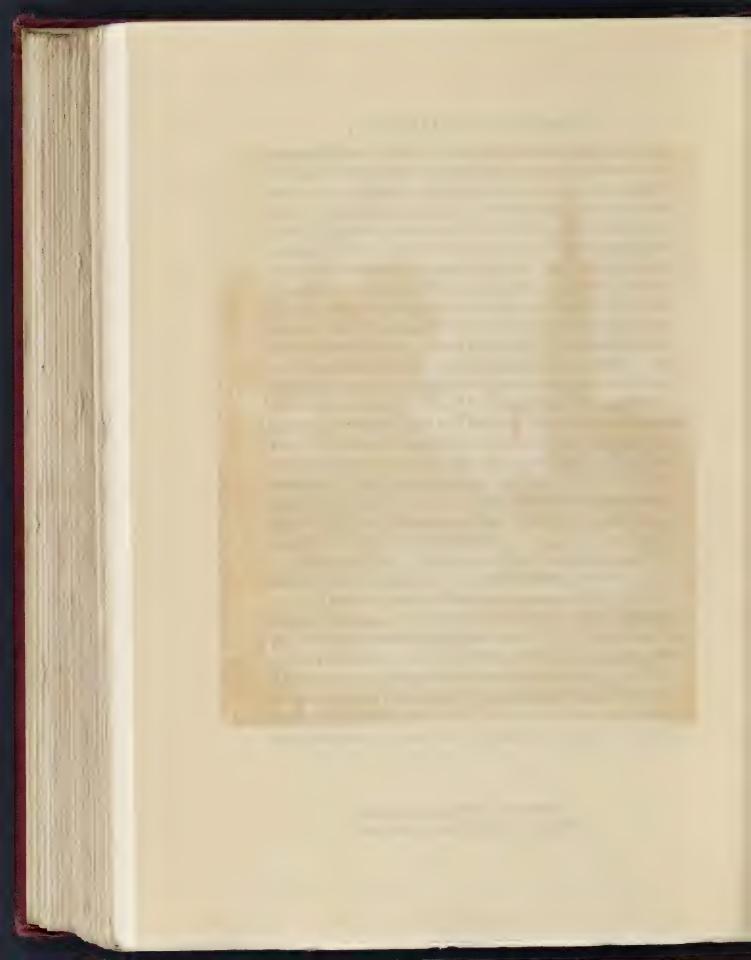
Side by side with these external influences must be ranged the still vivid recollection of the splendours of the first empire, under which France had for a moment seemed to be realising her most ambitious dreams. The tremendous personality of the Emperor himself had much to do with fixing that recollection

in the nation's heart. Napoleon, indeed, had something of the artist in him. Like a great actor or a great orator, he had an instinctive sympathy with his audience, and knew exactly when to appeal to their hearts by a grand sentiment, to their eyes by a glittering pageant, or to their spirit by some act of superb audacity. For painting he had done much. Not only had he ransacked the Continent for its art treasures, and carried them off to Paris, but he made his influence felt directly upon the painters of his time. David, himself not a little of a tyrant, was overborne by a will more despotic than his own, and had to turn from the frigid classicism he loved to paint real people in real robes and uniforms. With David's great pupil, the painter of the 'Pestiférés de Jaffe,' Napoleon's influence amounted almost to inspiration. The 'Pestiférés de Jaffe,' the earliest of Gros's series of Napoleonic paintings, was exhibited in 1804. Constable's pictures were not seen in the Louvre till twenty years later, so that if Gros had but continued working in the field he had appropriated, the real credit of the revolution might have been his. With the fall of Napoleon however Gros's inspiration vanished, and the movement he initiated was left to others to carry on. After the return of the Bourbons the livelier spirit which had for a few years invigorated the arts became drowsy. Instead of the forcible colouring and the natural gestures which Gros in his early maturity had rediscovered, all painting became subject once more to the stern classical canons of which David was the high priest.

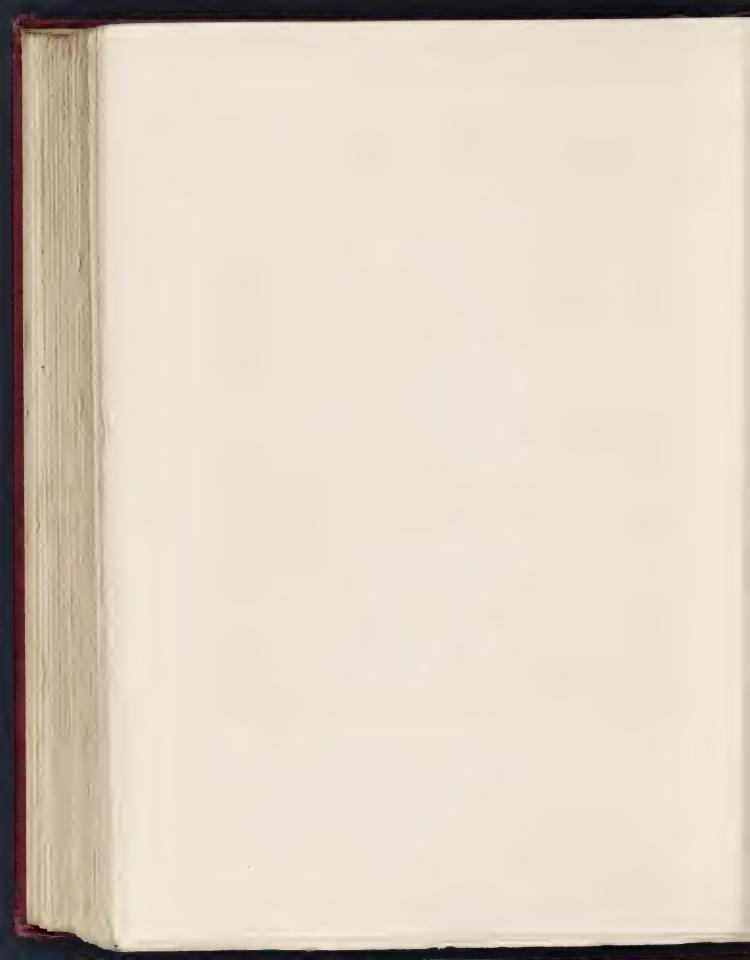
The term 'Classical' is often misconstrued. The qualities connoted by the word are all in reality more or less needful to the perfect work of art. Dignity of sentiment, clearness of expression, masterly control of the emotions, simplicity of treatment, subordination of parts to the whole, unhesitating rejection of all superfluous matter—these qualities are the very elements of style in a masterpiece of music and of literature, as well as of painting. Yet when such laws are imposed upon minds that are naturally too limited to furnish their art with new material, or too tame to dare to express it, the result is intellectual servility. In the hands of a pedant or a weakling, dignity of sentiment quickly turns to pomposity, clearness of expression

A ROMANTIC HOUSE, HAMPSTEAD.

Exhibited 1832. From the Oil-Painting in the National Gallery.







to mechanism, restraint to dulness, simplicity to emptiness, subordination to pettiness, and selection to bigotry. When Constable's pictures were first shown in Paris, the arts in France, as officially represented, were passing through a period of such degeneration. The air might be charged with murmurs of revolt, with aspirations for the freedom already attained elsewhere, with memories of the heroic epoch which had passed away on the field of Waterloo, but a degraded classicism still remained the firm faith of those in power.

Nevertheless, it is not quite fair to say that all actual expression of the new spirit vanished with the return of Gros to a frigid imitation of David. As early as 1812 Géricault had been an exhibitor at the Salon, and, up to his death at the age of thirty-two in 1823, the succession of works he exhibited was one long graphic protest against the renunciation of life and reality and colour which was preached by his seniors. His great picture in the Louvre, 'The Raft of the Medusa,' which appeared in 1819, though it may seem to us oldfashioned in tone-an effect which age and dirt (if I remember rightly, the picture is still unglazed) alone would produce in eighty years-might almost have come from the hand of some exhibitor at a comparatively recent Salonsay that of 1880. Still more modern in conception is Géricault's picture of 'Epsom Races' exhibited in 1821. He had visited England and been deeply impressed by the freshness of Lawrence, and Constable, and James Ward; he had recognised the reactionary genius of Delacroix almost before Delacroix himself was conscious of it, and only a premature death prevented him from carrying to completion the reforms he had conceived.

The definite stand was thus first made in France by Delacroix, who had been a companion of Géricault in Guérin's studio, and had become one of his warmest admirers. At the same time he was a friend of Bonington, to whose technical mastery of both oil and water-colour he afterwards bore such enthusiastic testimony. Since Delacroix was undoubtedly the most important personality connected with the development of modern painting in France, and his influence upon the other young artists of his time was so over-

whelming, it is necessary to understand clearly the sources from which he derived his inspiration.

There can be little doubt that his companionship with Géricault directed the first impulse of his growing genius. He was the friend and admirer of Bonington, but there was an essential difference in the talent of the two men, which made any similarity in their art at the most only a superficial resemblance.

Consider, for instance, Delacroix's first Salon picture, 'The Bark of Dante,' exhibited in 1822. Delacroix had known Bonington for half a dozen years, and yet there is not a trace of Bonington's influence in the whole work. Though the tortured figures in the lake may indicate a reminiscence of Michelangelo, though the deep, rich colour may convey with it some suggestion of the mature art of Jordaens, the whole thing is in reality absolutely original. The boat passing straight across the field of the picture, with the group of standing figures above, looking down on the writhing sinners below, make what was for the time and place of its conception an utterly novel design. A Giotto might in the past have seen the incident so, but the learning and effort of the intervening centuries had so confused the fine youthful freshness of thought, which alone could dare to find such simple and direct expression for its visions, that 'The Bark of Dante' appears as a new thing among the balanced, rounded, and stereotyped compositions contemporary with it.

Nor is its scheme of colour only an adaptation of the harmonious arrangements of the Old Masters. In their pleasing appositions of crimson, rich green, and warm blue, floating in a rich atmosphere of golden brown, do we often catch that note of poignancy, of shrillness, which makes the colour of Delacroix so puzzling and so stimulating? In 'The Bark of Dante' that note sounds definitely for the first time—the knell, as it were, of the drowsier harmonies of the past. The principle of the thing had long ago been silently recognised by the great colourists of former ages—Reynolds, for instance, hints at it in his Fourth Discourse, but Delacroix was its first consistent advocate.

From the point of view of technique also, 'The Bark of Dante' is absolutely original in its departure from the old restraints of complete definition of the forms, and of uniform suavity in the handling. Delacroix's brushwork is turbulent, emphatic, immediate, the pigment seeming to convey the passionate attitude of the artist to us directly, without the intervention of any detailed deliberate scientific process. The very indefiniteness of the figures, which troubled the painter's contemporaries so much, is equally purposeful, stating, as no amount of finish could ever state, the shadowy elemental spiritual side of the creatures—a secret learned no doubt from the greatest of the Florentine masters, whom age after age has adored and misunderstood.

I have mentioned 'The Bark of Dante' at some length, because in it the qualities of original design, poignancy of colour, and directness and personality in the treatment, which are the characteristics of the naturalistic revolution, are already more than latent, although Delacroix had not yet visited England nor seen the work of Constable. Two years later, in 1824, when he sent 'Le Massacre de Scio' to the Salon, he did see the three Constable pictures there. He was immensely impressed by them, and in the four days preceding the opening of the Exhibition is said to have practically repainted his own work, making it brighter and more luminous. Freshness of tone, then, seems to be the principal lesson which Delacroix learned from Constable. 'The Bark of Dante' proves that the great and abiding qualities of his art were his own before he ever came in contact with the work of his fellow revolutionary in England.

In connection with this Salon of 1824 a good deal has been said about the influence of Bonington. In the case of Delacroix we have seen that this influence was at first practically *nil*. If we may trace it at all afterwards, we can only do so tentatively in the brilliancy and bustle of such a picture as the 'Marino Faliero' in the Wallace Collection. Bonington certainly was brilliant, accomplished, and original, but he was also essentially superficial, and could therefore exercise a permanent influence only on superficial minds.

We can see that he had much to do with the making of Isabey, of Decamps, and of a whole host of second-rate landscape painters in oil and water-colour, but he had nothing to do with the making of any artist of a higher order. Looking back on his achievement from the distance of three-fourths of a century, we can see in him only a master of manipulative dexterity—a Lawrence without the teaching of a Reynolds. The influence of such a craftsman on his followers was bound to be evil, exalting the immediate pleasing of the eye by clever tricks of the brush above those deeper and more abiding pleasures of the trained senses and the trained intellect which the great masters in all the arts provide for us.

Some may think that the name of Michel should have had the place of honour among the revolutionaries. He was undoubtedly one of the earliest of them, nevertheless his life was so obscure, and the merit of his sober landscapes was so utterly unappreciated, that he was absolutely without influence on his own generation, and it was left to a later age to recognise that such an artist had ever existed. The real change in men's minds which made the rise of modern landscape possible in France was wrought by painters of the figure.

Gros was practically the first to prove to his countrymen that modern life provided admirable material for picture-making; Géricault to show that it could be dramatic; Delacroix to make it the vehicle of emphatic passionate personality. The contributions of Constable were freshness of tone and intimacy of spirit—that is to say, an affection for the things represented quite apart from and at times stronger than any affection for the representation itself. The importance of these contributions for the masters of modern landscape is so obvious as to need no explanation. It is not, therefore wonderful to find the great Delacroix, in his powerful plea for artistic liberty in the Revue des Deux Mondes writing thus:—'D'où vient le charme des paysages flamands? La vigueur et l'imprévu de ceux de l'Anglais Constable, le père de notre école de paysage, si remarquable d'ailleurs, qu'ont-ils de commun avec ceux du Poussin?'

THE GAME-KEEPER'S COTTAGE.

About 1832. From the Oil-Painting in the possession of James Orrock, Esq.





Many years later De Goncourt writes in his journal:-

'Une après-midi passée devant les tableaux anglais de Groult, devant ces toiles génératrices de toute la peinture française de 1830, ces toiles qui renferment une lumière si laiteusement cristallisée, ces toiles aux jaunes transparences semblables aux transparences des couches superposées d'une pierre de talc. Oh! Constable, le grand, le grandissime maître! Il y a parmi ces toiles un Turner; un lac d'un bleuâtre éthéré, aux contours indéfinis, un lac lointain sous un coup de jour électrique, tout au bout de terrains fauves. Nom de Dieu, ça vous fait mépriser l'originalité de quelques-uns de nos peintres originaux d'aujourd'hui.'

When Constable's pictures made such a sensation at the Louvre in 1824, Théodore Rousseau, the pioneer of modern landscape painting in France, was only twelve years old. His first experiment in painting from nature is said to have been made in 1826, and he did not exhibit before the famous Salon of 1831. If tradition is to be trusted, he did not make the acquaintance of Constable's work until the following year. After a short and unfortunate apprenticeship to a second-rate classical painter, Rousseau started working directly from nature, with the aid of such technical experience as he could gather from the Old Masters in the Louvre, more especially from Claude, Karel du Jardin, and Van Goyen. That he was also strongly interested and influenced by Hobbema and Ruysdael is, I think, evident enough.

Of the struggles and disappointments of Rousseau's life this is not the place to speak. They had little to do with his art, except, perhaps, in limiting the field of his ambitions and his experiments. As a painter his work is so analogous, in some respects, to that of Constable, that a comparison with the English master is an excellent way of examining the Frenchman's peculiar character.

Like Constable, Rousseau was a pupil of the Old Masters; but while Constable, with all his affection for Claude, and his admiration for Ruysdael, is seen at bottom to be a far-away inheritor of the technical practice

of Rubens and Rembrandt, of Gainsborough and Reynolds, Rousseau remains, as a rule, a follower of the lesser Dutchmen. Now and then we find in him, it is true, more than a hint of Rembrandt, but as has been already mentioned, it is from Van Goyen and Karel du Jardin, from Hobbema and from Ruysdael, that he derives the foundation of his technical practice.

Constable's technical equipment, though amateurish compared with that of any of the great professional painters of the past, was at least adequate for his own purpose. He worried over his pictures often enough, as better painters than he have done, but the worry is seldom evident in the finished work. Long years of copying and portrait painting had given him sufficient assurance and experience for expressing the essence of what he wanted to express. His difficulties began where he attempted doing what had never been done before, with effects for whose rendering he had no technical precedent.

In Rousseau's work the mechanical part of picture-making seems to have been less perfectly understood. He always appears to be struggling with difficulties, where a thoroughly trained professional ought not to find any difficulty; thus, few pictures of his are without distinctly weak passages from the technical point of view. He is almost universally praised for his draughtsmanship, the quality which he himself valued most highly in art; yet it is impossible to rid oneself of the idea that he drew with the greatest labour and effort. His material may at last assume the desired form, but it seems to do so unwillingly, as if it were engaged in a stubborn struggle with its manipulator, and were bent on clogging his brush and hindering his hand to the last possible moment.

This intractability in turn has an effect on the quality of Rousseau's pigment. Too often it is spotty, incoherent, or unpleasantly niggled, and lacks the fluency and simplicity which we associate with the work of a master craftsman. Not a little of Rousseau's unpopularity, not a few of his disappointments, may be ascribed to this unfortunate defect. To a nation like the French, with whom the precise and ordered use of material is

almost an instinct, this technical weakness would be especially irritating, and would blind a spectator's eyes to the power and significance it so laboriously expressed.

Constable, as we have seen, painted nature from affection. Rousseau approached nature almost as an analyst or an anatomist might do. Constable, when he had expressed the freshness and light, the wind and the weather, of the scene before him, was content to stop. Rousseau, from attempting to extract the last atom of fact from the things he saw, from trying to render the nature of the ground, the structure of a rock, the thousand and one peculiarities of a tree, never knew when to stop, but reworked his pictures until the freshness of his first inspiration had vanished. In artistic effect he is thus often surpassed by men of far less intellect and character who were content to take their painting more light-heartedly. Nevertheless, it is by his very seriousness that Rousseau's place among modern landscape painters stands so high, for without it the vast impulse which he gave to naturalism on the Continent would have been left to other hands.

One cannot imagine Corot, for example, taking the lead in any active rebellion against constituted authority. All his kindly spirit asked was to be let alone. For him, so long as he might paint as he pleased, and be on good terms with his fellows, academies and students and committees and critics were practically non-existent. Corot's art is in consequence entirely personal—a quiet backwater, quite apart from the main current of naturalism. Stripped of its modern tone and its modern technique, his early work is that of a disciple of Poussin, his later work that of a disciple of Claude—a disciple who has looked at his master's drawings perhaps even more carefully than at his paintings.

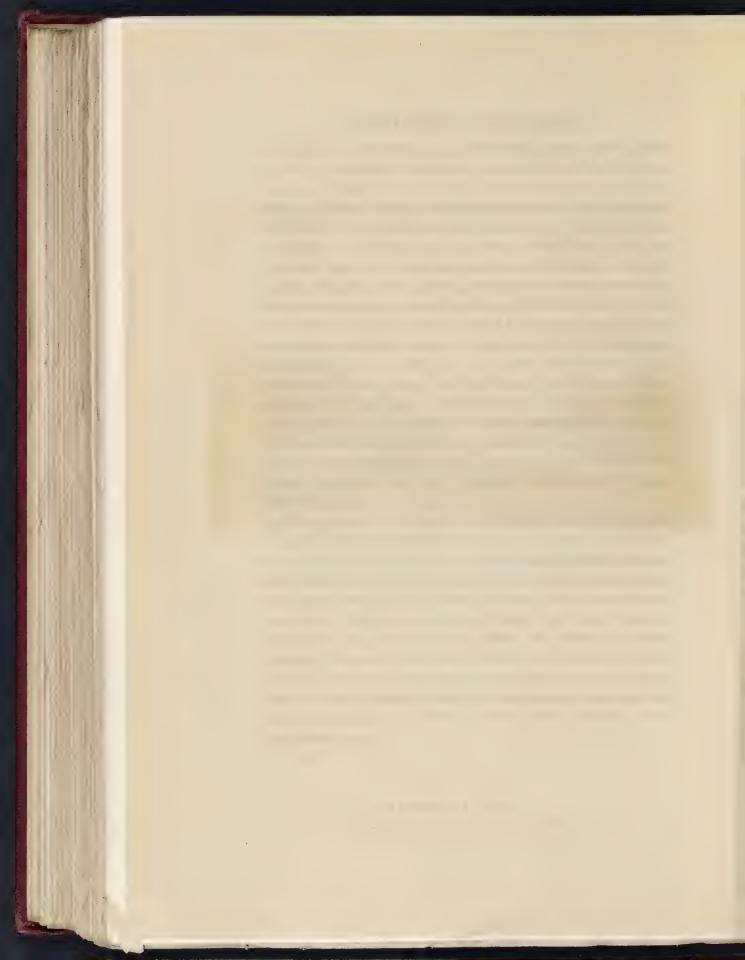
'The Haywain' and its companions were exhibited at the Louvre just before Corot, then in his twenty-ninth year, started on his first journey to Italy, but in the hard, careful studies made during that visit it is impossible to trace any direct influence of the Englishman's free brush-work and fresh colour. However, three years later, in 1827, when Corot himself exhibited

at the Salon for the first time, it is stated that his pictures were hung close to works by Constable and Bonington, so we may presume that he studied those painters then if he had not done so before. Nevertheless, the change in his own technique which marks the first appearance of the characteristic picture-gallery Corot did not take place till much later. As late as 1834, for instance, we find a well-known critic writing: 'MM. Bertin, Aligny, and Corot have been for their particular walk in art what Ingres has been for the grand style; they have made the picturesque revolutionaries ashamed of their excursions, and have shown them that nothing can be made of effects without form.' Corot, in fact, at the time of the naturalistic revolt, was too individual, and too firmly attached to his own ideals of art, to be immediately or strongly influenced by other men's work. From the first he had certain definite views about painting, based on tradition and his own personal sympathies. To these he held all his life. Some element of luminosity, some suggestion of a greater freedom in handling, some hint of the possibility of matching the tones of nature more frankly than the Old Masters had done, Corot may have gathered from the example of Constable, but it is difficult to find in his work any quite definite indication of the English master's influence.

Though Corot is like Constable in his affection for a particular aspect of nature, in his feeling for chiaroscuro, and in his fondness for the work of Claude, his attitude towards painting is in reality entirely different, resembling rather that of Richard Wilson. With all his modernity of tone and pigment and handling, Corot is a very deliberate and most skilful composer, relying upon art for his effects and not upon chance. He is also a charming draughtsman, and one of the most delicate and scientific of modern colourists. His range of design and of colour is certainly somewhat limited, but within those limitations his sense of balance and harmony is unusually acute. As with his master, Claude, his most accidental arrangements are usually more spontaneous and fortunate than the pictures where his ambition took a loftier flight.

A VIEW AT HAMPSTEAD.

About 1833 From the Oil-Painting in the National Gillery.







Again; though his loose, light brush-work and cool tints of rose and pearl and opal cannot challenge comparisons with the more perfectly controlled dexterity, and more splendid and varied colouring of the great masters of the past—a challenge which Corot himself would have been the last to suggest—there is so much method in them as to make them appear classical by the side of almost any modern work in landscape, quite apart from the message of simplicity, serenity, and freshness which they bear to us so gently. Corot's own comparison of himself with Rousseau gives perhaps the fairest estimate of his temper, though it is hardly just to his science.

'Rousseau, c'est un aigle. Quant à moi je ne suis qu'une alouette qui pousse de petites chansons dans mes nuages gris.'

Of the immediate companions of Rousseau, Dupré and Diaz are the most important. Dupré made a great reputation for himself in his own time, and undoubtedly did much to bring naturalistic painting before the notice of the public. He was a thoroughly sincere, honourable, industrious man, who evidently studied Constable almost as much as he did his friend Rousseau, so that his work is fresh in feeling as well as forcible. Nevertheless, his enthusiasm for art was in excess of his talent for it, so that it is more than doubtful whether subsequent ages will allow any prominent place to him. His sentiment, if sincere and forcible, is rarely without a hint of shallowness, so that his popularity is easily accounted for.

As an executant, Dupré has some of the disadvantages of Rousseau, without the intense earnestness which makes even a failure by Rousseau more interesting than the success of a mediocrity. His sense of design is limited, so that his compositions are usually scattered, ineffective, or commonplace. His draughtsmanship and his feeling for colour are adequate rather than remarkable. His brush-work is mannered and spotty, lacking repose, breadth, and dignity. Altogether Dupré is a sound painter of the second rank, hardly creative in any sense of the word, but so appreciative of the good in greater men's work as to catch at times more than a little of their inspiration.

Of Diaz it is impossible to speak with so much respect. Now and then in his early work he shows himself a skilful painter, and attains brilliant effects of colour; but there seems to have been some ingrained defect in his temper or his intellect which prevented any fuller artistic development. His colour, by which even his admirers have to explain their admiration, seems accidentally striking rather than consistently beautiful; while the weakness of his figure-work shows how inadequate his technical powers really were. Monticelli, for instance, with all his failings, was not only far more brilliantly gifted, but also a more accomplished artist. In his day Diaz doubtless had no small share in assisting the artistic revolution in France, and he seems personally to have been a good fellow and a generous friend, but of all the men whose names are commonly associated with the rise of naturalism, he is undoubtedly, not excepting the much overrated Troyon, the least capable, if not the least original.

Daubigny, the youngest of the group, appears, till quite recently, to have been but little noticed, possibly because his life and work alike were quiet and unobtrusive. I cannot help thinking that the excellence of his painting is still rather undervalued. Though I am not sufficiently acquainted with all the details of his artistic education to say exactly how far Daubigny was directly influenced by Constable, there can be no doubt that his work shows a remarkable affinity to that of his English predecessor. I have seen in the house of a friend a copy of one of the Constable's in the Louvre, which technically bears every conceivable sign of having come from Daubigny's hand. If this be the case, the similarity of spirit in the two men's work is no mere coincidence. Other influences, of course, come to our minds when we are looking at Daubigny's work—suggestions of Van Goyen, of Rousseau, of Corot, of Millet, and even of Dupré—but his spiritual kinship with Constable is constantly evident.

Daubigny, for example, always shares with Constable that intense feeling for locality which gives a landscape a hall-mark of sincerity that can be impressed in no other way. Rousseau is concerned with the earth as an

organism of which the place he is painting is but a part. Corot wafts us away into a dreamland, some undiscovered country, neither France nor Italy, but a tract that lies between them where the misty meadows of northern Europe are overlooked by the white sunlit walls of the south. Daubigny, like Constable, for the most part paints particular places by the side of a single river.

By thus limiting himself to the study of one district, Daubigny was able to master it thoroughly. It is rare to find a work of his which is confused, or as to the meaning of which the spectator can have a moment's doubt. Every sketch or picture of his aims at expressing one particular mood or aspect of things, and no other. In this simplicity, this unity, lies the secret of his charm. His method of emphasis does not depend on colour, though Daubigny's colour is always pleasant and harmonious. Nor does it depend on his powers of drawing, which are at least adequate. His emphasis is conveyed by the direct expression of a single mood—an uncommon gift in these scientific, ambitious days. By the very absence of all uncertainty he thus at first sight is apt to seem too simple. Nevertheless, with all this obvious frankness there lies a spirit of deep, temperate gravity, which remains to befriend us when the appeals of more demonstrative men have lost all interest.

Like Constable, Daubigny possesses a technique of his own—a system of painting similar to that of the Englishman in that it mainly depends on working with pure colour upon a monochrome foundation, but differing from his in the substitution of a stroke of the brush for a pat with a palette-knife. In a hypercritical mood one might ask whether the touch might not have been less ungainly, whether a more suave and shapely method of brushwork would have detracted from the result. Yet if we compare Daubigny with his contemporaries, the comparison technically is not to his disadvantage, except perhaps in the case of Corot and Millet; and Corot and Millet nowadays are almost Old Masters.

One landscape artist who may fairly be said to continue the tradition of Rousseau is still living. The work of M. Harpignies, which at last seems

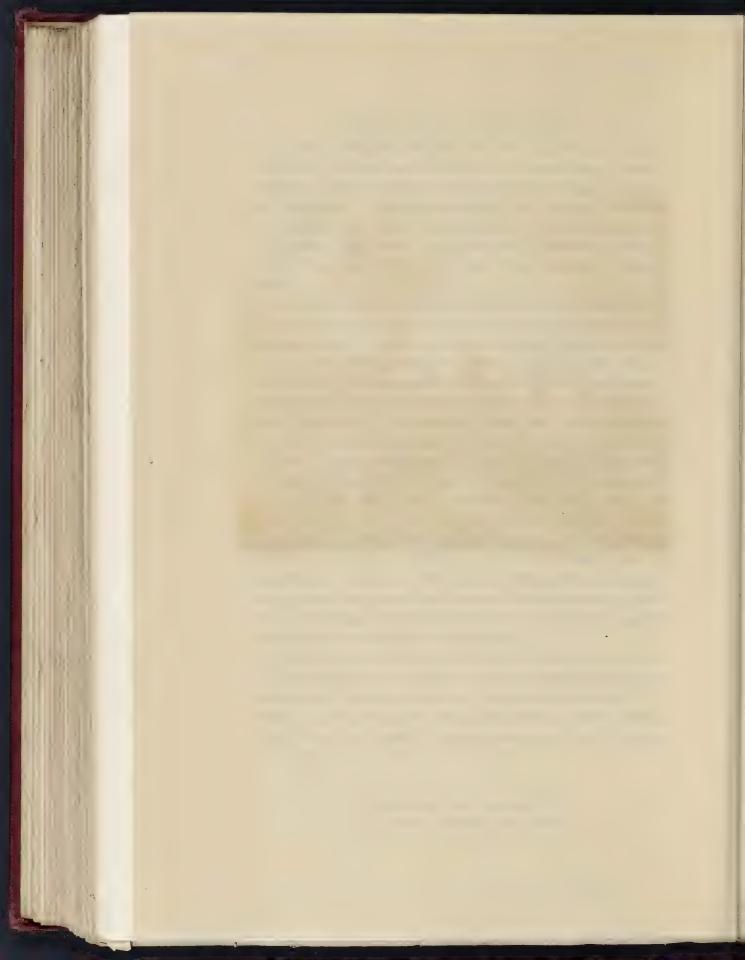
to be receiving proper recognition both here and in his own country, reveals no startlingly original talent, yet from its utter sincerity and its technical completeness it must always have a place with the best painting of its kind. M. Harpignies is a masterly draughtsman, with a peculiar instinct for catching the springy strength of the branches of a tree, and the modelling of a stretch of rough ground; a cool and dignified, if rather stern, colourist; a fine designer; while he possesses as well a very definite strain of poetical feeling.

In his painting we find not only that general sense of spaciousness and repose which is the charm of so much good landscape work, added to a patient, temperate accuracy which indicates a student of Poussin, but there is also that sense of reality and intimacy which Constable brought back to art. The best work of Harpignies owes much of its force to the sense of portraiture it conveys. His trees are not elegant abstractions, but real trees to which the painter could direct us if we asked him the way. His ground is evidently painted from actually existing places, and is no mere convenient convention for filling a blank at the bottom of his canvas. The time of day is noted with astonishing truth by an accurate statement of the relative values of the earth and sky, and by careful shaping of the cast shadows. The sharp tones of the fields in spring, of the drifted leaves in autumn, are rendered with the same unflinching sincerity which lingers over the tracing of the delicate mazes by which the dusty green or gold of his foliage passes so naturally into the quiet sky. Even the air of restraint, of sternness almost, which breathes from his art has a certain tonic quality in these days, when the lover of painting is so constantly driven by the ubiquity of the plausible and the pretty to take refuge in the sensational.

Before passing to the immediate beginnings of contemporary painting, we must consider briefly the work of a great artist who, like Corot, stood somewhat aside from the main stream of the naturalistic movement. J. F. Millet is now recognised as one of the most important men of the nineteenth century, though his reputation is commonly based more upon the fact that

A COTTAGE AND SANDBANK.

About 1834. From the Oil-Painting at South Kensington.







he was the first to make a specialty of painting the poetry of labour, than upon the fact that he was a creative artist of a very noble kind.

In the art of Millet two distinct strains of descent can be traced. The strain which makes him generally popular is a certain suavity and tenderness in his treatment of childhood, maternity and old age; this he derives from Correggio through Prudhon. The strain which gives him his peculiar force and power is one that is derived from Michelangelo and Rembrandt, in part no doubt through Daumier.

In his landscape work the former element gives him a peculiar feeling for the gradation and palpitation of atmosphere, the mastery of a large and solemn twilight in which his poor sheds, lopped hedgerow trees, and toiling figures take on a mysterious majesty. To the memory of Michelangelo, Rembrandt, and Daumier, Millet owes not a little of his success in combining sternly simplified outlines and sternly simplified modelling with the most definite emphasis possible, and a sure control of light and shade, which make him the modern master of chiaroscuro. It is in virtue of this peculiar quality of emphasis that Millet differs radically from Constable.

Constable is primarily inspired by a sincere affection for the actual things and actual places he depicts. He regards them rather as things to be loved in themselves than as pictorial materials to be disposed this way or that as imaginative, technical, or decorative conditions might suggest. Hence Constable's tendency in holding the balance between nature and art is to a course of all-round compromise—to give us a little bit of everything, and to be everywhere just so emphatic as to fail to convince us very strongly about anything at all. This is at least true of many of Constable's large compositions. In his sketches considerations of time usually compelled him to stop work before he could impair the freshness and force of his first thought by trying to elaborate it.

Millet, at least equally sincere, earnest, and affectionate, can only see the things he paints in a pictorial form. To that his mind instinctively transposes the actual fact before his eyes, and to emphasise what is pictorially essential

he is content to leave all else abstract. His pastels, and some of his paintings, the 'Spring' in the Louvre, for example, show that, when he wished to do so, he could catch the fresh colour of the earth, the sky, and sprouting leafage; yet in most of his important work he disregards these facts ruthlessly, as things unessential, nay positively distracting, to his purpose. What is the result? Is it not that Millet, in spite of his adherence to the warm tones of the Old Masters, is recognised as one of the princes of modern art—as the one great painter of the labouring man, whose toil and rest, whose joys and sorrows, he has brought home to us more nearly than all his successors who have spent their lives among peasants, accurately matching every tone of their features, their dress, and the air which envelops them?

In this respect Millet stands alone among his contemporaries and his successors as an everlasting witness to the truth that realism in art is more perfectly attained by duly controlled emphasis than by any process of scientific imitation. One other feature of his work must be noticed. Millet is a master of design. He possesses in an uncommon degree that faculty which has always been rare in Europe, of perfect taste in the spacing of his compositions. In his figure-work the element of largeness and dignity is usually associated with his admiration for Michelangelo. His drawings of landscape might with equal justice be quoted to prove that he caught the secret from Rembrandt. However much truth there may be in these surmises, there are not a few designs of his for which neither Michelangelo nor Rembrandt can be held answerable. In their startling grandeur, which at times amounts almost to caprice, they seem hardly European at all, but make one wonder if some stray wavelet of the flowing tide of Japanese influence may not have outstripped its fellows, and borne to Millet some hint of the genius of Hokusai.

The origin of modern scientific landscape painting may be said to begin with Courbet. In his work for the first time we meet with a deliberate effort at representing things as they really are without any intervention of feeling or temperament. In this effort Courbet to some extent failed, as

any human being was bound to fail. It is impossible for a man practising an art whose niceties call on him every moment to exercise his personal taste, or his reasoning faculties, to turn himself absolutely into a machine. Nevertheless the effort to be thus absolutely mechanical was Courbet's constant boast, and his work proves that the boast was not altogether an empty one.

He renders facts with almost brutal vigour, but the very impassiveness of the statement deprives the things represented of all vitality. Courbet's universe, though real and palpable, is also motionless and dead. His woodland scenes, with all their force of drawing and colour, may excite our admiration, but fail to gain our affection; for, as a foreign critic has remarked, no bird would dare to sing there, nor any wind to blow. With his marine painting the result of this peculiar attitude is different. Seen under the chilly, uncertain skies which Courbet loved to place above it, the sea reveals the sterner side of its character, and becomes silent, pitiless, menacing, and irresistible. The suggestion of such an awful elemental power could only be conveyed by some temper as simple and impassive as its own; and Courbet's is the nearest approach to that temper which has hitherto appeared in art. With Turner the sea is apt to be too dramatic, with Hokusai too fantastic; while in the hands of lesser men it becomes too playful, too pompous, or too provincial. From Courbet alone do we get an adequate rendering of its stolid, everlasting, unkindly strength.

This reduction of the aim of art to the reproduction of natural fact was intensified by Manet when he devoted himself entirely to the study of the problems set by natural or artificial illumination. In Manet's work, however, landscape has but a secondary place, so we may pass at once to the group of painters who devoted themselves almost exclusively to that branch of art. With the so-called 'Impressionistes' the last trace of Constable's influence vanishes from landscape. Though in his later work he had given more than a hint of new possibilities in the rendering of the brightness and movement of the air, it was not to Constable that Monet and Sisley and

Pissarro turned for inspiration when they began experimenting upon the splendour and palpitation of sunlight, but to Constable's great contemporary, Turner.

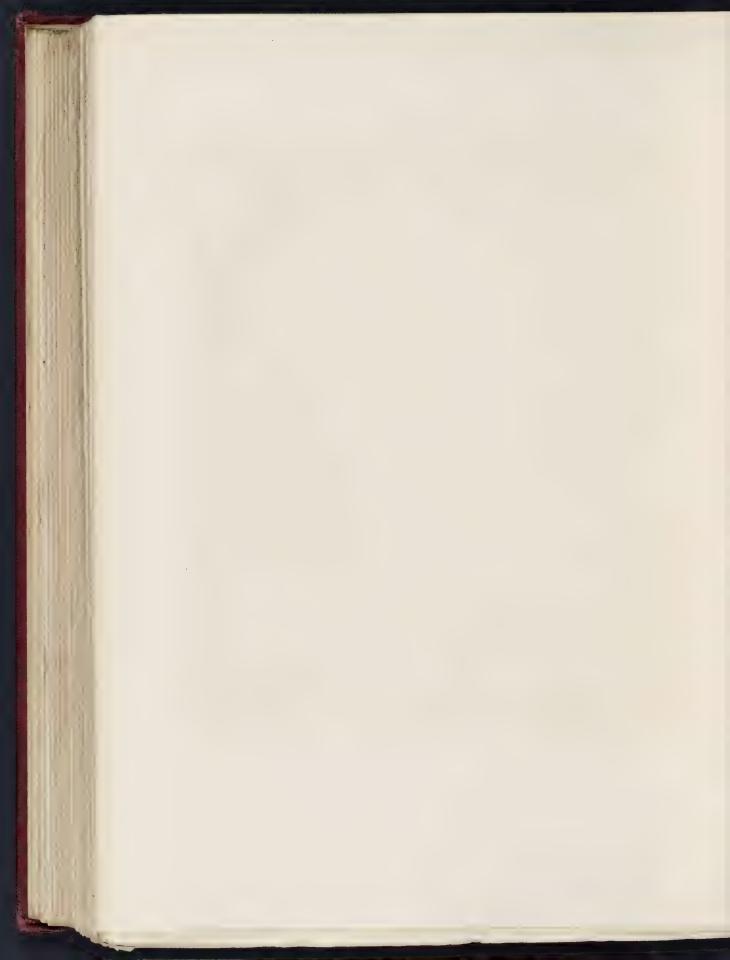
Turner's aim throughout his whole life had been practically that of the Old Masters—the making of grand compositions. In his youth these compositions had depended more upon chiaroscuro than upon colour; in his later years they were based upon colour alone. To obtain the highest possible degree of brilliancy and contrast, Turner had invented a technique of his own, in many respects resembling that of water-colour drawing. Its essence lay in very thin, transparent painting with pure colour upon a luminous ground of solid white. By means of this technique Turner was able to work out his harmonies of colour in a far higher key than any previously attempted, till he seems to paint, as Constable once said, 'almost with tinted steam.' In fact, so far as brightness was concerned, Turner might appear to have exhausted the resources of oil-painting.

Claude Monet and his fellow-workers recognised that this extraordinary brilliancy made the nearest approach to the luminosity and colour of real air that had yet been achieved in art, and set about obtaining something like it themselves. Turner's technique was too personal a process to be easily assimilated by others, so the Frenchmen had to obtain their effects in their own way. Being trained to work in solid paint, they adhered to that practice, but adapted it to the new conditions they had formulated. Knowing that all mixing of colours tends to reduce their tone and freshness of hue, the 'Impressionistes' taught themselves to paint with an exceedingly limited palette of primary and secondary colours. All complex tones were matched by the juxtaposition of small touches of pure paint, instead of by mixing tints on the palette, or glazing one tone over another. The process undoubtedly produced remarkable results, for it could render effects of natural light and colour with wonderful freshness and gaiety; while the very spottiness and vagueness of handling that resulted conveyed more directly than any other method could do the vibration and palpitation of the atmosphere.

THE VALLEY FARM.

Exhibited 1835. From the Oil-Painting in the National Gallery.





Whether the pictures so executed are always as beautiful as they are interesting is another matter. Those whose eyes are trained to appreciate the fine painting of the past cannot fail to feel some regret that broad, shapely brush-work and exquisite quality of pigment should have vanished from painting so utterly. One might hesitate, too, to affirm definitely that all the force, freshness, and brightness of this modern work is really worth the sacrifice of the delicacy, the dignity, and the profundity of the older art.

The difference between the painting of the 'Impressionistes' and all that had been done before was not one of technique alone. Turner had experimented with the splendours of sunlight with the object of finding new material for deliberate arrangements of colour, and not with any set purpose of imitating particular effects exactly. Venice, for instance, in the glowing sketches of his old age, is no longer painted for her own sake. Her canals and palaces and campanili are utilised simply as a convenient kind of scaffolding by which a series of daring colour symphonies may be built up far above the regions of sober fact.

Claude Monet studies sunlight in a very different spirit. With him Truth ceases to be the handmaid of Beauty, and becomes her mistress. While Constable and Rousseau had aimed at sincerity of personal impression, and the more prosaic Courbet to a plain statement of material facts, Monet practically tries to turn landscape painting into a branch of optical science—an exact record of the colour, pitch, and quality of the atmosphere and the things it envelops at various times and seasons. Such an exact record is of course unattainable. No pigments at present known, however luminous, can render the actual brightness of outdoor sunshine in its own key. The most startling effects obtainable in paint must always be a compromise in a scale of tones many degrees lower than that of nature. Nevertheless, the painting of Monet will always be exceedingly interesting, for he has shown how far it is possible to go in suggesting the actual luminosity of the sunshine of this world, just as Turner has shown us how luminous the sunshine of dreamland may be.

In another way, too, Monet can claim to have been of great service to art. As all modern chemistry is really based on the discoveries accidentally made by the alchemists in search for the philosopher's stone, so, I think, not a few of the characteristics of the art of the future will have their origin in the discoveries made by Monet and his companions. The 'Impressionistes' have already recorded more facts about the real colour of the earth, the air, and the sky than all their predecessors put together. They have noted the characteristics of many places and climates at every season of the year. The separate items of this record only occasionally contain, by accident as it were, those elements of order and structure which, in some degree or other, are conditions of any work of creative art. Yet, by the enormous accumulation of facts with which they have enriched us, they may do the art of the future no small service, for they have shown what innumerable chords of delicate colour, of rosy grey, of lilac, of turquoise, and the like, may be seen in nature by those who have the eyes to see them.

The achievement of the 'Impressionistes' thus marks a very wide departure from the tradition of sentiment and technical practice initiated by Constable and developed in various ways by Rousseau and his followers. That tradition, however, is still a living force with the painters of Holland; the one continental country besides France which can be said to possess a true 'School' of landscape painting.

The modern Dutch masters are, for the most part, Paris trained, yet they are far from being French in their art. Some racial instinct seems to stand between them and any quite definite emphasis of fact, or feeling, or beauty, or science. Like their forerunners in the seventeenth century (the unique genius of Rembrandt alone excepted), they are adequate conscientious craftsmen rather than independent creative artists. If we knew nothing of the history of art in the past, we might sometimes be inclined to rate them higher. Israels, for example, would often seem intensely sympathetic and profound did we not recognise how much more profound Rembrandt and Millet had been. Matthys Maris, at his best the most original artist of

them all, might appear still more original did we not remember that he was born more than forty years after Corot.

The characteristic of these modern Dutch landscape painters, when viewed as a whole, is moderation. Their designs are never forced, never majestic, and rarely quite feeble. Their technique is sound and accomplished, showing but little sign of personal emphasis or personal preference, and therefore well calculated to avoid exciting much irritation or much enthusiasm. Their drawing is sound rather than delicate or incisive. Their colour too is sound, rather heavy perhaps, yet not inharmonious, seeming always to have been grounded on some convenient studio formula, rather than to have been the outlet of genuine instinct or invention as with the great colourists. They are fond of nature, possessing the true Dutch liking for the canals and meadows and windmills and muddy sea of their own country, but they never allow their fondness to swell into any nobler enthusiasm, or to carry them too near the domain of science.

The Dutch painters, in fact, like Constable, make a sensible all-round compromise with nature, but unlike him they cannot claim to have invented the terms of it, or to have extended them very far. While thus maintaining a good general average of excellence which makes almost any picture of the School fit to hang in good company without disgrace, they seem quite content never to advance a step further, nor to

'ever cross the line
That from the Noble separates the Fine.'

Perhaps this in some degree accounts for their present popularity. They express no thought which might not occur to the average man, and they speak in no terms which he cannot immediately understand. Now that is not the way in which a really great artist—a Beethoven, a Shakespeare, or a Michelangelo—can work; and the layman who wants to understand such mighty spirits must take thought and train himself before he can hope to follow them to the heights which they have attained. Any art which is not over the head of its contemporary public will be below the intellectual level

of the next generation, and that is the danger which the modern Dutch painters will have to face. Yet as they have usually attained their success without stooping to cheap sentiment or cheap pathos, and as they are, in their way, genuine and capable craftsmen, they are at least safe from the utter oblivion or contempt which punishes the pot-boiler and the charlatan.

Elsewhere on the Continent the majority of modern landscape painters are content to infuse into the stock recipes for popular picture-making just so much of the method and the brightness of Monet as will prevent them from seeming out of date and as their public will put up with. Here and there, of course, some individual artist shows a genuine feeling for nature. In France, for example, the work of Cazin and others might be cited. The glittering snow, lonely homesteads, and swirling rivers of Norway have been rendered by Thaulow with so rare a sympathy, science, and taste as to make his pictures rank with the best modern work of their kind. To high imaginative qualities they may lay no claim, but they are well designed, well drawn, and well painted, fresh and charming in colour, and display besides such an intimate knowledge of, and affection for, the simple places represented as to make them genuinely poetical.

The work done by Segantini among the Italian Alps is even more intimate and sincere, though it is characterised by the sharpness, the oddity and the freakishness which denote the man who has lived and laboured apart from his fellows. Thaulow, the cultured cosmopolitan, has learned how to keep talent well within the recognised bounds of artistic good taste. Segantini's art is the art of the self-taught man, who is never certain as to whether he can do something he has never done before. When he paints his Alpine pastures, seen, as he was accustomed to see them, between the rough logs of a fence, or through the half-open door of a shed, he catches their sharp, pale colouring, and suggests the thinness and clarity of the air about them, with amazing verisimilitude. His occasional excursions into imaginative art, though always interesting, are far less successful. The range

of his best work is thus exceedingly limited, but the force, novelty, and genuineness of his feeling within that range, both as a man and as an artist, are remarkable enough to ensure the permanence of Segantini's reputation.

Meunier, the sculptor and painter of the Belgian Black Country, is a similar solitary figure, though in his case the influence of other masters, notably that of Millet, is apparent. As Millet made the study of the Barbizon peasantry his special province, so Meunier has devoted himself to the pitmen and ironworkers among whom he lives. There is, however, a modern note in his art which separates him finally from Millet. Millet's pictures make labour something dignified and august, the employment of folk who after all are divinities-simple, earthy, and rough-hewn perhaps, but still moving or resting always with a certain godlike grandeur. Meunier's workmen are only human beings, forced by the huge, irresistible machine of commerce into an eternal routine of ill-paid, strenuous toil, against which the spirit is always in angry revolt, from which the tired flesh can only escape by death. The hopeless fate of these labourers is emphasised by their surroundings-the gloomy arches, barren cinder-paths, sullen canals, frowning blast-furnaces, and the sulphurous twilight that environs them. As a painter, Meunier is perhaps more uncouth than he need be, but his method of expression is so singularly direct and emphatic, his sympathy with his subject-matter so profound, that subject-matter itself so novel, various, and impressive, that he is able to force himself upon the attention, where a more delicate craftsman might lose himself in niceties.

In selecting Thaulow, Segantini, and Meunier for special mention, I have intended only to show the general tendency of naturalism at the present day—that is to say, the restriction of a painter's aim to one special kind of subject. Many other instances of this tendency might be quoted did considerations of space and proportion allow of it, but as several will naturally occur at once to every reader, it is hardly necessary to do so.

When we look back on the development of modern landscape, it is hard to believe that the scientific painting of Monet can be its final utterance.

2 C

Like any other scientific discovery, it is bound to have an influence on all subsequent research in similar fields, but its appeal can only be overwhelming for natures where sympathy with science is inborn. Now science, though necessary in some degree to the completion of the well-balanced artistic temperament—for without it an artist could find no form for the expression of his ideas—is not always, or even usually, the predominant factor in that temperament. Whatever, then, the fate of the imperfectly gifted may be, we can be fairly certain that the great painters of the future will not be the slaves of science. However well they may understand and appreciate it, they will be sure to keep it in its proper place, and make it the servant, and not the master, of the creative imagination.

We have only to think of a few of the most important artists of our own time to see in what different ways this may be done. M. Legros, for example, who has lived all his life among the pioneers and leaders of modern art, is content to recognise their originality, without attempting to imitate it; preferring in his own grave conceptions to utilise the tradition of Holbein, of Millet, or of Rembrandt. In Germany the forcible, exuberant Böcklin treats his subjects with the utmost freedom, using the bright, solid colour of the moderns, or the clear browns and greys of the ancients, just as the fancy takes him. It is refreshing in these days of conflicting theories to meet with a painter who has the breadth of mind and the pluck to use his materials thus, and were Böcklin's taste and artistic faculties more on a level with his strength, invention, and vitality, he would undoubtedly be one of the great European masters of the nineteenth century.

However, as far as landscape is concerned, it is hard to point out any single feature in Böcklin's treatment of it which is indubitably novel. He certainly is a vigorous, versatile composer of motives already known, but it may be doubted whether his additions to the stock of existing art are of the quality to make him immortal. Sincere unpretentious feeling, like that of Costa, often outlasts more florid ambitions.

A more notable contribution to landscape painting has been made by 202

Böcklin's French contemporary, Puvis de Chavannes. Puvis de Chavannes practically devoted the whole of his life to the execution of his large decorative paintings, and his selection and treatment of his subject-matter were governed absolutely by the conditions such work imposes. By realising these conditions—by recognising that a large painting must never appear to be anything else than what it is, a decorated part of a wall surface—Puvis de Chavannes has almost invented a new art.

The characteristics of this art may be briefly summed up as follows. First, remarkable unity of general tone, obtained by avoiding all sharp contrasts of light and shadow, and all insistence upon strong local colour. Secondly, great breadth of mass, obtained by reducing the modelling of all forms to the simplest terms possible. Thirdly, great boldness of design, obtained by the frank silhouetting of the component parts—by the bringing one large, flat space frankly against another, and suggesting form, substance and texture chiefly by exquisitely delicate drawing of the edges.

As mural painting, the result is undoubtedly magnificent, not only in virtue of its natural beauty—the vastness of its spacing, the majesty of its design, the sober delicacy of its colour, the vigour, the freshness, and the naturalness of its grand primeval figures (Man seen, almost for the first time, in his true relation to his mother earth), or the exquisite luminosity of its tranquil silver atmosphere—but also in virtue of the air of dignity the work acquires from the spirit of grave self-control which inspires it.

The great qualities of such an art could not, of course, be transferred to an easel picture without considerable modification. The scale of tone and colour and handling appropriate to a mural painting thirty feet long would seem ineffective or coarse in a picture one-tenth of that size; and design, which is the very foundation of art, suffers even more than tone or colour by any considerable alteration of scale. Nevertheless, however hard we may find it to make direct use of the discoveries of Puvis de Chavannes in the making of easel pictures, his work may at least be of no little service to us indirectly. Most professional artists of to-day who take their art

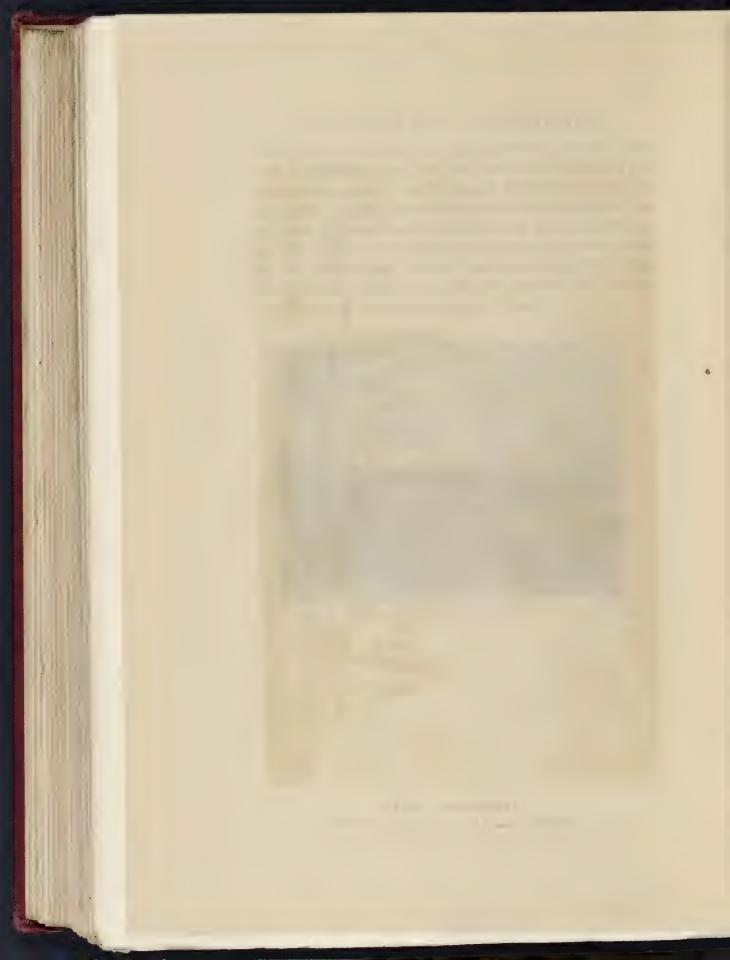
SUCCESSORS ON THE CONTINENT

seriously would, I think, agree that the great difficulty of modern painting lies in its complexity, in the number and diversity of the excellences it is called upon to combine. To such the example of Puvis de Chavannes, like that of Millet, can hardly fail to be enlightening and encouraging, for they have proved that success is more certainly gained by absolutely fulfilling the few conditions essential to a given purpose, than by trying to fulfil at the same time a host of other conditions, which, however admirable in themselves, cannot fail to confuse and obscure the particular phase of beauty which it is the aim of each true work of art to reveal.



STONEHENGE, WILTS.

Exhibited 1836. From the Water-Colour Drawing at South Kensington.









CHAPTER XII

CONSTABLE'S SUCCESSORS IN GREAT BRITAIN

URING the early part of the nineteenth century English landscape painting was unusually fortunate in being supported by several of those definite personalities which break the monotony of its general character—its desultory anxiety to please or amuse the general public. In addition to Constable himself there was the great Turner at

the zenith of his power, there was Crome, there was Cotman, there was James Ward, while water-colour in the hands of De Wint and Cox was showing that the serious tradition of Girtin was not entirely lost. Such a surprising outburst of talent was too abnormal to last long. The soil was quickly exhausted, and a period of hopeless sterility set in. Paintings, it is true, continued to be manufactured by the thousand; for the country was prosperous, and there was no lack of purchasers; but in how few of them

is there more than a trace of the genuine enthusiasm which had inspired the previous generation? Whatever the form this painting takes, whatever the medium employed, the result is the same. Considering it nowadays, we see that it merely embodies the popular tastes of the time, with just so much added dexterity of hand, and just so much recollection of tradition as was needed to persuade people that the work before them was done by a trained professional.

With the close of the Napoleonic epoch the Continent had been thrown open to travellers, and the English were the first to generally avail themselves of the privilege. Every one with any pretensions to culture felt it his duty to make the tour of the Rhine, to see Switzerland and the Tyrol and the chief cities of France and Italy. It was thus only natural that the painters of the time should cut their coats according to the prevalent fashion. The Landscape Annuals, with their elaborate engravings, were published for the enlightenment of the middle classes, while the wealthy could impress their acquaintances and freshen their memories by hanging their walls with the paintings and drawings of Stanfield and Harding and Prout and Roberts.

Nowadays the plates in the Landscape Annuals seem almost as tiresome and artificial as the washy letterpress with which they were dished up.
The paintings of the men who illustrated them are hardly less out of date.
The fact that they still bulk largely in public and private galleries, in salerooms, and in dealers' warehouses, makes them remain familiar objects;
but the novelty and surprise of discovering that there are other countries
besides England with national styles of architecture and national costumes
of their own has lost its first freshness. We can therefore look at these
pictures without being prejudiced by any personal association with their
subject-matter, and when we have done so must recognise that, however
admirable they may be as illustration, as art they are practically non-existent.

The designs of these painters are seen to be mere *pastiches* of the Turnerian panorama, or the Boningtonian picturesque, so that their work has always a second-hand look. They modify the tones and colours of nature so

IN GREAT BRITAIN

much as never to seem quite sincere, without daring to take the liberties with her that the creative artist must take. They never seem to be interested in anything in particular, but apparently wish to emphasise everything at once just to the point which their public can immediately understand, and no further. So we find in a single picture a bit of dark cloud to give solemnity, a bit of white cloud to give brightness, a bit of blue sky to give serenity, a few dark figures to give force, a few in gay red and blue costumes to give animation. What is the consequence? The total effect is weak and uncertain; being neither solemn, nor bright, nor serene, nor forcible, nor animated, but merely a heterogeneous jumble.

So when these painters draw, they draw with the ubiquitous mechanical clearness of a drawing-master, and not with the nervous, caressing affection of the true draughtsman. In the same way they have a series of recipes for the colour of the sky, the fields, and the earth, which they combine without the least feeling for nature or for pictorial harmony, and are always in consequence as colourists both untrue and unpleasant. Their technique, like their drawing and colour, is mechanically skilful, but utterly feelingless. The quality of their paint is monotonous, and yet their handling is not broad. They stipple everything up to a conventional degree of finish without ever realising one single detail perfectly. In fact, their cold, shallow, dexterous painting might have been passed over in silence, were it not that by its mere quantity, and by the publicity still accorded to it, it assumes a degree of importance in the popular eye, which, though moderate enough, is out of all proportion to its deserts.

With one or two exceptions, the recognised leaders of the contemporary school of water-colour painting are even more unhelpful. Whether they try to be clever in imitation of Bonington, or whether they wash and stipple and wash again in the manner of Copley Fielding, they are equally far from producing anything which can be called a work of art. Their drawings have all the faults of the mannered oil-painting of their time, intensified by the inherent weakness of their medium as they employ it.

Water-colour is an admirable means of expression for a great artist—for a Girtin or a Turner, for a Rossetti or a Burne-Jones—but is usually the ruin of a small talent. A genius can do away with the poorness of its hues, can modify the hard metallic edge of a wash without making it effeminate, and can get with it the vibrant quality and the strength of tone which a good picture must have. The less highly endowed mind is apt to be captivated by the aerial quality of a sky or a distance which the medium suggests so readily, or to be charmed by the freshness and spontaneity of the contrast between a space of white paper and the wet colour floated against it; until, in the excitement attendant on such important and remarkable discoveries, the original pictorial impulse, never perhaps very vigorous, is utterly forgotten. Even the mighty Turner is not always free from the former failing, though his amazing boldness, delicacy, and invention may persuade us to be his accomplices.

The smaller men fall more often and more heavily. David Cox, for instance, found it almost impossible to sell his serious designs, and had to provide his public with raw, brilliant blots and splashes to save himself from starvation. The greater part of the work on which his reputation is based is thus mere pot-boiling. Only now and then do we have the good fortune to come across something that reveals a power of design, a sincerity, and a depth of feeling which under happier circumstances might have given him a place among the great masters of landscape. The grand drawing at South Kensington of a storm sweeping over a moor, and a very large study of a waterfall exhibited at the Guildhall a few years ago, are the most notable instances I know of Cox's real strength. Peter de Wint, though to a lesser degree, also lifted himself above his fellows by not a few fresh and powerful sketches and a small number of fine oil-paintings; the pair at South Kensington will serve as examples. In his elaborate drawings the design is lost in mechanical finish, the colour is overworked, and the handling becomes petty, till the result is not a whit less tiresome than the work of the rank and file.

IN GREAT BRITAIN

There is a vein, too, of genuine art and genuine feeling, perhaps inherited from Blake through Samuel Palmer, in the laborious compositions of John Linnell, for, with all their glaring faults of taste and weakness of technique, his paintings are usually sincere and personal. In this respect John Linnell is a strong contrast to Müller, the one painter of the first half of the century who seems to have looked carefully at Constable, instead of being carried away by the luxuriant composition of Turner or the melting softness of Copley Fielding. In his obvious parade of dexterity, Müller often recalls Bonington, but it is to Constable he owes most of his inspiration. Unfortunately a general air of contrast and motion was all that he was able to borrow from the older master. He never really understood Constable's profound love and knowledge of nature, so that in spite of its force and cleverness his painting is cold, insincere, and rarely without a touch of the theatrical. Müller, in fact, stands in the same relation to Constable that Stanfield does to Turner.

If we are to find any trace of Constable's influence elsewhere, we must search for it in the bulky class of painting which may be expressed in general terms as the 'rustic landscape with figures.' For years it enjoyed a popularity almost equal to that of the followers of Turner and Bonington and Copley Fielding: and even now its sentiment appeals strongly to the great heart of the British public.

Its origin dates from the time when the middle class in England was resting complacently after the strain of the Napoleonic wars, and for the decoration of its villas demanded an art which could be understood without any excitement of the emotions, any exertion of the intellect, or any training of the taste. The middle class was prosperous and ready to spend its money freely on the thing it wanted, and the thing it happened to want could easily be manufactured by a trained artisan. The supply of the necessary article was thus always equal to the demand.

The citizen asked for a picture which would remind him of the country.

The artisan went straight to have a look at Constable, learned from him a few

CONSTABLE'S SUCCESSORS

recipes for suggesting a crumbling cottage roof, a green field, a brown cow, a blue sky, and one or two of the commoner and most easily imitable kinds of white cloud. He then went to the water-colourists to learn the trick of putting in a well-washed studio peasant in spotless white linen and a bright red cloak, to prevent the country from looking deserted or poverty-stricken. These valuable acquisitions he put together at home according to the rules laid down in handbooks on sketching, arranging his colours so that they would look bright and cheerful on the walls of an exhibition, and finally smoothing his canvas all over with an even stipple to give it the softness which is the hall-mark of British sentiment, and the finish which is the hall-mark of British manufactures.

So successfully did these artisans gauge the ignorance of the public, that their work remains even to this day the small change of dealers and auctioneers. Its steady decline in commercial value in spite of Royal Societies, titles, grand dinner-parties, municipal or colonial worthies, and ubiquitous newspaper paragraphs, has undoubtedly shaken the faith of the large picture buyers. Nevertheless there are, and, since education spreads so slowly, there will be for some time, plenty of people who really prefer the coloured supplements of Christmas numbers to any more ambitious painting. To these the work of Creswick, and Shayer, and their successors of to-day, will continue to appeal.

Outside these three classes of painters—the illustrators of the Landscape Annuals, the water-colourists, and the tradesmen who manufacture picturesque rusticity—it is hard to discern during the latter half of the nineteenth century in Britain much more than the desultory and isolated efforts of individuals. The landscape work of the Pre-Raphaelites and their followers certainly seemed for a time to have a chance of leading painters forward under a common standard; but the individualism characteristic of our race, combined with social and pecuniary considerations, soon sowed the seeds of disunion and desertion. Here and there we come across experiments which might have gone much further had they been backed by any concentrated and definite purpose.

IN GREAT BRITAIN

Ford Madox Brown and Holman Hunt, for instance, succeeded in painting the colour of sunlight and moonlight long before Claude Monet, but were too much in earnest about politics or religion to regard such an achievement as of any value or interest in itself. The early landscape backgrounds of Millais are models of luminosity, delicacy, and precision, but he wanted to make money, and was soon spoiled. Nay more:—his very dexterity in treating things inartistic has perhaps made Millais an unfortunate influence upon subsequent British landscape painting. How many have been attracted by the obvious fidelity to nature and the wonderful manipulation of 'Chill October,' without ever pausing to think if the thing is really a work of art at all—without asking themselves whether it may not be limited in feeling, heavy in colour, and hardly effective as design.

The jewel-like glimpses of the country of romance which Rossetti now and then reveals to us through an open window have suggested much to others; and although Burne-Jones found there the dark mountains which Perseus passes in search of the Gorgon's head, the softer country where the Holy Child is born, the close, stubborn thickets of Broceliande, and the drowsy castles of mediæval story; although Watts has annexed wide tracts of primæval wilderness and woodland and whirling sky, a large portion of that continent still remains virgin soil for the bold explorer.

Another definite effort at style was made by Frederick Walker and George Mason. As far as the matter of their painting is concerned, they are of course essentially Little Masters, having all the sentimentality—the love of prettiness, pettiness, and obvious pathos—which attracts the buyer of potboilers. They will, however, always have a place among the British artists of the century, because they really did try to design, to knit their ideal rusticity into a definite pictorial whole, by rhythmical arrangements of line and colour. They were not strong enough to design more than gracefully, nor sensitive enough to colour finely, nor great enough to imagine profoundly, but they did aim at beauty rather than at popularity, and so will always rank with the artists and not with the tradesmen.

CONSTABLE'S SUCCESSORS

The early death of their younger contemporary, Cecil Lawson, is usually spoken of as a great blow to English art. Considering the general standard of our national landscape painting at the time, this regret is not wholly unwarranted, but whether the loss to the world was considerable is less certain. Cecil Lawson, like Mason and Walker, was undoubtedly a true artist, for he seems always to have set to work with a definite pictorial purpose. He was also a craftsman of considerable taste, accomplishment, and feeling. He does not, however, seem to have developed, even if he possessed it, that strong impulse towards creative design which marks the great master, so that 'Not Proven' is the fairest verdict to pass upon his genius.

As is natural for an island race living between the stormy waters of the North Sea and the vaster expanse of the Atlantic, we have had no lack of marine painters ever since the time of Turner. Stanfield, for instance, can paint the sea excellently, displaying whenever he deals with it a sincerity, sympathy, and power that are rarely or never found in his panoramic views of places on the Continent.

Constable, with his natural directness and simplicity, has suggested in his sketches the gay beach and lively shipping of a watering-place, the sullen repose of the ocean under a cloudy sky, and the tremendous gloom of a storm. His knowledge of wave-forms, and therefore his skill in drawing them, was far inferior to that of Turner and Stanfield, but by his determination to paint things actually as he saw them, he was the first to represent the true colour of the sea.

Marine painting, however, was but a single phase, and not by any means the most important phase, of Constable's many-sided achievement. The more deliberate and scientific study of the sea was left for his successors to carry out. Among these the names of John Brett and Henry Moore will at once occur to the memory. Each, in his own way, was a specialist. Brett chose a certain type of Cornish coast scenery—ruddy cliffs, sandy coves, limpet-covered rocks, a clear blue sea fretted with innumerable ripples,

THE CENOTAPH.

Exhibited 1836. From the Oil-Painting in the National Gallery.





IN GREAT BRITAIN

and a sky usually just filling with the light puffy clouds which presage a change in the weather. His early sympathy with the Pre-Raphaelites left its mark upon Brett's technique. He did not build up his pictures in the solid traditional manner, but painted things directly, and so conscientiously that the effect of his work is often almost metallic from the completeness of his modelling. Yet where no great contrast of tone or colour is involved, as in the well-known 'Britannia's Realm,' he has proved conclusively that his method can make a picture which, though it may not be powerful, poetical, or impressive, is at least fresh, interesting and harmonious.

Henry Moore started work with a similar passion for painting detailed fact, but with a rather wider outlook. Having once, however, made a reputation for painting a blue sea stirred by a fresh breeze, he was practically compelled by his public to paint nothing else for the rest of his life. This one subject he certainly painted more truthfully than any one else has ever done. In the freshness and vigour of his colour and handling, in the sense of wind and motion he can convey, Henry Moore not unfrequently reminds us of Constable, though his training was less complete, his outlook less wide, and his feeling for art and nature far less profound. Perhaps by working so much out of doors he seems to have contracted a habit of painting without thinking, and to have forgotten that a coloured transcript of the things we see, however careful and skilful, is not the same thing as a good picture. Hence his colour is often raw, his brush-work uncouth, and his design haphazard. The latter fault alone is enough to prevent him from having a place among the great artists, but he was a vigorous and able painter whose work will always form a distinct feature in the history of the British School.

Mr. J. C. Hook would appear to have studied Constable more carefully, and to possess a quite considerable gift of design. His pictures are thus almost always well constructed, both as regards their technique and the disposition of their masses. His talent is weakened to some extent by a liking for petty sentiment, which makes him now and then degenerate into

CONSTABLE'S SUCCESSORS

a painter of the rustic picturesque, and more frequently to injure really good pictures by dragging over-clean and over-coloured studio peasants into them. With him, however, the direct influence of Constable may be said to end. One or two of Mr. Hook's contemporaries may perhaps occur to the memory as having evidently looked at Constable's work, but as they were neither creative artists nor skilful craftsmen, and therefore can be of use to no one, it would be mere waste of time to discuss them in detail. The few land-scapes Mr. Watts has chosen to paint contain more beauty, dignity, and suggestiveness than the entire bulk—and it is, alas! no small one—of this empty specious Naturalism.

For any serious thought or earnest effort in the British landscape painting of to-day, we must turn to two groups of artists who can only claim descent from Constable indirectly, through the painters of France and Holland. Had Corot and Matthys Maris never lived, the art of Mr. Muhrman and Mr. Peppercorn would hardly have been what it is. Had Claude Monet never lived, even Mr. Mark Fisher might not have painted quite as he does, while Mr. Clausen, Mr. Stott, and Mr. Steer would have lost their best teacher.

Mr. Muhrman and Mr. Peppercorn are perhaps rather heavy handed, rather brusque in their brush-work, rather murky in tone, but they are artists with a firm grip of good tradition and considerable taste, feeling, and mastery of simple design. In a collection of modern pictures, brightened up for exhibition, they may seem casual in technique and monotonous in hue; but the longer their pictures are studied the more certain are we to find them well constructed, delicately coloured, and full of a genuine poetry which nowadays seems to have vanished from all paintings except those which only a millionaire can afford.

Mr. Mark Fisher's quite personal method of work is so brilliant and forcible that sometimes a moment's thought is needed before the spectator can recognise the sound design, harmonious, vibrating colour, and the delightful sense of air and moisture and sunlight which breathes from the

IN GREAT BRITAIN

canvas. Mr. Stott and Mr. Clausen have done admirable work on the same lines. Mr. Wilson Steer's ambitions are wider. To an ideal in which, whether consciously or not, the force, the motion, and the wide horizons of Rubens play no small part, he brings a technique founded on the vividness of Monticelli and the science of Claude Monet. Such a technique may embarrass the lover of shapely brush-work and delicate pigment, if it be examined too closely, and may not be the best way of making a picture that will keep clean in the smoke and dirt of a modern city; but it does undoubtedly make it possible to suggest the most brilliant atmospheric effects, and to combine them into admirable and original designs. In this way the work of Mr. Steer and his companions is a most interesting example of the combination of creative art with the modern scientific treatment of light and colour.

Having come thus far, it is impossible to avoid mentioning one other influence which, whether for good or for evil, seems to be permanently acclimatised here—the influence of Japan. Technically that art may be resolved into three distinct elements—a summary method of sketching with the brush, derived from the calligraphic drawing of the Chinese; a delicacy of tone, surface, and detail derived indirectly from the miniature painting of India and Persia; and a harmony of composition produced by the iteration of a few selected colours, made necessary by the national method of colour-printing with a limited number of wood blocks.

These three characteristics of Japanese art—free drawing with the brush, extreme delicacy of tone, and deliberate composition by the choice and arrangement of a few colours—have been translated into the terms of oil-painting by the genius of Mr. Whistler. In his landscape-work the striking contrasts and freakish experiments of Hiroshige are turned into delicate, capricious romance. For the perfecting of this transformation Mr. Whistler has the advantage of being a subtle craftsman. His brush is always under sensitive control, and does not set to work until the artist has decided exactly what the shape, tone, and consistency of his next stroke is to be. His painting is

CONSTABLE'S SUCCESSORS

thus as fresh and complete as it is exquisite in colour and masterly in design.

The painters of the Glasgow School are often called followers of Mr. Whistler, but where they do follow him, they do so at a considerable distance. Their colour is thus too often forced, crude, and garish, and their design frequently seems loose and accidental from over-reliance upon the chance effects produced by slap-dash handling. Yet, since their pictures are usually based upon the selection of a definite mood of colour, and a definite scheme of composition of masses, their landscapes show a marked uniformity of pictorial success as compared with the average contemporary English work; while the general recipe of the school for free brush-work ensures a lightness of general effect which is pleasant to eyes accustomed to the stodgy popular ideals of finish. The painting of the Glasgow School is thus a fresh and vigorous effort at art, but something of the refinement of design, of colour, and of brush-work that is characteristic of Mr. Whistler must be assimilated before it can develop further. At present the Glasgow painters are satisfied with being nearly right everywhere, and quite right nowhere.

These few disconnected notes may at least serve to separate one or two of the most definite and artistic phases of modern landscape from the innumerable anæmic hybrids that are forced upon our notice everywhere. They may also show how absolutely the general feeling of painters towards their art has shifted since Constable disputed with Sir George Beaumont. Painters and their friends are nowadays as fervent devotees of nature as then they were devotees of the Old Masters. Indeed there would almost seem to be a risk of naturalism being made as heavy a chain for the young artist as were the classical canons in Constable's time. Were that to happen, the painter would forget that nature is not the end of art, but only one of the means towards it, and, by that forgetfulness, would lose the privilege of freedom to do what his soul desires—to reveal the beauty his imagination has constructed—in the fittest possible way that his education and his instinct

IN GREAT BRITAIN

can invent, however traditional or novel, or laborious, or summary that way may be. Such personal freedom, and not realism or idealism, or any other hard and fast theory, was the guiding principle of Constable's life, as it has been the guiding principle of all other true artists before or since.



217



APPENDIX A

ENGRAVINGS AFTER CONSTABLE'S WORK

H. DAWE.

Leathes Water, or Wythburn Lake, Cumberland. Mezzotint. 5×15. From the drawing made in 1806; South Kensington, No. 194. Published by Mr. Constable, 63 Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, May 1, 1815.

J. LANDSEER.

Landscape with Windmill. Line engraving. 3\frac{3}{4} \times 5. From the drawing at South Kensington, No. 342. Called by Constable 'One of the Stoke Mills.' For The Social Day, by Peter Coxe.

FREDERIC SMITH.

View of Brighton with the Chain Pier. Line engraving. $7\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{4}$. From the picture exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1827. Colnaghi. 1829.

S. W. REYNOLDS AND (?) DAVID LUCAS.

A Canal Scene, the Opening of the Lock. Mezzotint. 15½×13. From the picture exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1824, and now in the possession of Mr. Charles Morrison.

This plate was begun by Reynolds, but he died without completing it. A most interesting proof of it in a very early state may be seen in the British Museum. Leslie states that the larger plate afterwards executed by Lucas was engraved from a different picture, but a comparison of the two prints seems to prove the contrary. Nevertheless Constable mentions copying his picture in 1825, and the copy may have been more exact than such things usually are.

DAVID LUCAS.

Various Subjects of Landscape Characteristic of English Scenery, principally intended to display the phenomena of the Chiar'oscuro of Nature. Published by Mr. Constable, 35 Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square. Sold by Colnaghi, Dominic Colnaghi and Co., Pall Mall, East.

The Prints apparently were not published in the order given in the Prospectus.

DAVID LUCAS-(continued	DAV	ID L	UCAS-	(continued
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- Frontispiece. House and Grounds of the late Golding Constable, Esq., East Bergholt, Suffolk. Mezzotint. $5\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{4}$. Afterwards lettered 'East Bergholt.'
- Spring. A Mill on a Common. Hail Squalls. Mezzotint. $5 \times 9\frac{1}{2}$. From the sketch at South Kensington, No. 144. Afterwards lettered 'Spring.'
- Sunset. Peasants returning homewards. Mezzotint. $5\frac{1}{8} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$. From the sketch at South Kensington, No. 127. Afterwards lettered 'Autumnal Sunset.' 1831.
- Summer Noon. The West End Fields, Hampstead. Mezzotint. $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$. Perhaps from the painting in the possession of Mr. George Salting. Afterwards lettered 'Noon.'
- Yarmouth Pier, Norfolk. Morning Breeze. Mezzotint. $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$. Perhaps from a sketch now (1902) in Paris, and not from the picture of the subject belonging to Sir Charles Tennant. Afterwards lettered 'Yarmouth, Norfolk.' 1832.
- Summer Morning. Harwich Harbour in the Distance. Mezzotint. $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$. From the sketch at South Kensington, No. 132, with slight alterations. Afterwards lettered 'Summer Morning.'
- Summer Evening. Cattle Reposing. Mezzotint. $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$. From the sketch at South Kensington, No. 585. Afterwards lettered 'Summer Evening.' 1831.
- Dell in the Woods of Helmingham Park, Suffolk. Mezzotint. 5\frac{3}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{4}\$. Probably done from a sketch for Constable's large picture of the subject exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1830. Afterwards lettered 'A Dell; Helmingham Park, Suffolk.'
- Hampstead Heath. Sand Pits. Storm approaching. Mezzotint. $5\frac{5}{8} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$. From the picture at South Kensington, No. 35. Afterwards lettered 'A Heath.' 1831.
- Stoke Church, near Nayland, Suffolk. Mezzotint. $5\frac{5}{8} \times 8\frac{5}{8}$. The sketches at South Kensington and the National Gallery do not correspond with the print. Afterwards lettered 'Stoke-by-Nayland, Suffolk.'
- Sea Beach, Brighton. A Heavy Surf. Mezzotint. $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{5}{8}$. Afterwards lettered 'A Sea Beach.' A small picture of the subject was sold with Mr. C. A. Barton's Collection in May 1902; another, perhaps the original of the engraving, belongs to Mr. George Salting; and a third version is in the possession of Mr. Lionel Phillips.
- River Stour, near Flatford Mill. Afternoon. Mezzotint. $5\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{8}{8}$. From the sketch in the National Gallery, No. 1816. Afterwards lettered 'Mill Stream.' 1831.
- Head of a Lock on the Stour. Mezzotint. $5\frac{5}{8} \times 7$. Possibly from the sketch now in the possession of Mr. Lewis Fry. Afterwards lettered 'A Lock on the Stour, Suffolk.'

DAVID	LUCAS—	(continued)

- Mound of the City of Old Sarum. Evening. Mezzotint. $5\frac{7}{8} \times 8\frac{3}{8}$. From the study at South Kensington, No. 163. Afterwards lettered 'Old Sarum. "Here we have no continuing city."—St. Paul.'
- A Summerland. Rainy Day. Ploughmen. Mezzotint. $5\frac{7}{8} \times 8\frac{3}{4}$. Afterwards lettered 'A Summerland.'
- Barges on the River Stour, Suffolk. Mezzotint. $5\frac{5}{8} \times 8\frac{3}{4}$. From a sketch for the picture in the possession of Mr. T. Horrocks Miller. Afterwards lettered 'River Stour, Suffolk.'
- A Watermill, Dedham, Essex. Mezzotint. $5\frac{5}{8} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$. Afterwards lettered 'A Mill.' 1830.
- Weymouth Bay, Dorset. Tempestuous Afternoon. Mezzotint. $5\frac{6}{8} \times 7\frac{1}{8}$. Either from the sketch at South Kensington, No. 330, or from a picture which in 1855 was in the possession of Mr. Edwin Bullock. Afterwards lettered 'Weymouth Bay, Dorsetshire.'
- Summer Afternoon. Sunshine after a Shower. Mezzotint. $5\frac{5}{8} \times 7\frac{8}{8}$. From the sketch in the National Gallery, No. 1815. Afterwards lettered 'Summer Afternoon—After a Shower.'
- The Glebe Farm. Girl at a Spring. Mezzotint. $5\frac{3}{4} \times 8\frac{3}{4}$. From the picture in the National Gallery, No. 1274. Afterwards lettered 'The Glebe Farm.' 1832.
- V Hadleigh Castle, Mouth of the Thames, Morning. Mezzotint. 6×9. From a sketch for the picture exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1829. Perhaps that sold at the Constable Sale, Lot 31. Afterwards lettered 'Hadleigh Castle, near the Nore.'
 - Vignette—Hampstead Heath. Mezzotint. $3\frac{5}{8} \times 6$.
 - Fourteen plates, uniform with the above series, were published by Lucas shortly after Constable's death.
 - Porch of East Bergholt Church. Mezzotint, $7\frac{3}{8} \times 6\frac{1}{8}$. From the picture in the Tate Gallery, No. 1245.
 - Gillingham Mill, Dorsetshire. Mezzotint. $7\frac{1}{4} \times 6\frac{1}{8}$. From the picture at South Kensington, No. 1632.
 - Sir Richard Steele's Cottage, Hampstead Road. Mezzotint. $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{4}$. From a sketch formerly in the possession of Miss Constable.
 - Jaques and the wounded Stag. Mezzotint. $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{8}{8}$. From a drawing formerly in the possession of C. R. Leslie, R.A., and now in that of Mr. Arthur Kay.
 - Cornfields near Brighton. Mezzotint. $5\frac{1}{8} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$. From a sketch formerly in the possession of Miss Constable.

DAVID LUCAS-(continued)

Stone Henge. Mezzotint. $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$. From a sketch formerly in the possession of C. R. Leslie, R.A.

Willy Lott's House. Mezzotint. $6\frac{8}{4} \times 6$. Possibly from the sketch at South Kensington, No. 166, which, however, does not contain the figure. Called by Lucas 'Willy Lott's House with the Painter's Father.'

A Cottage in a Cornfield. Mezzotint. $7\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{4}$. From the picture at South Kensington, No. 1631.

Hampstead Heath. Harrow in the distance. Mezzotint. $5\frac{5}{8} \times 7$. From a picture once in the possession of Mr. G. Pennell, and afterwards (1855) in that of Mr. Edwin Bullock. The print closely corresponds with a sketch at South Kensington, No. 123.

Flatford Mill, Suffolk. Mezzotint. $5\frac{5}{8} \times 7$. From the picture in the National Gallery, No. 1273.

Castle Acre Priory. Mezzotint. $5\frac{7}{8} \times 8\frac{7}{8}$. Worked up from a rejected plate of 'The Glebe Farm.' A proof of the plate in its original state is in the Print Room of the British Museum.

View on the Orwell, near Ipswich. Mezzotint. $5\frac{5}{8} \times 7\frac{1}{8}$. From the sketch at South Kensington, No. 160.

Windmill near Colchester. Mezzotint. $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$ From a sketch in water-colours, formerly in the possession of Miss Constable. An elaborate imitation of this subject in oil fetched a considerable price at Christie's in the spring of 1902.

Arundel Mill and Castle. Mezzotint. $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{8}{8}$. From the picture exhibited in the Royal Academy in 1837.

Five other small plates by Lucas were subsequently issued.

A Mill near Brighton. Mezzotint. $5\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$. From the sketch at South Kensington, No. 588.

View on the River Stour (The White Horse). Mezzotint. $5\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{3}{8}$. From the picture in the possession of Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan.

Hampstead Heath. Mezzotint. $5\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{8}$. From a picture formerly (1855) in the possession of Mrs. Gibbons.

Salisbury Cathedral, from the Meadows. Mezzotint. $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{3}{8}$. From a sketch for the picture exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1831.

Opening of Waterloo Bridge. Mezzotint. $5\frac{3}{8} \times 8\frac{5}{8}$. From a sketch for the picture exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1832.

Lucas also engraved six plates after Constable on a larger scale.

DAVID LUCAS-(continued)

The Lock. Mezzotint. 22\frac{2}{8} \times 19\frac{3}{8}. From the painting exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1824. A proof was sold for eighty-six guineas in 1901.

F. G. Moon. 1834.

- The Cornfield. Mezzotint. 22\frac{3}{8} \times 19\frac{3}{8}. From the painting exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1826.

 F. G. Moon. 1834.
- Dedham Vale. Mezzotint. 23×19½. From the painting exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1828. A proof of this plate fetched ninety-six guineas in 1901.

 S. Hollyer, 1836.
- The Rainbow (Salisbury from the Meadows). Mezzotint. 21\frac{3}{4} \times 27. From the painting exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1831. A proof of the first state fetched eighty-five guineas in 1901. Hodgson and Graves. 1837.
- River Stour, Suffolk (Stratford Mill). Mezzotint. 11\(\frac{3}{4}\times 16\frac{1}{2}\). From the painting exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1820. Afterwards called 'The Young Waltonians.'

 D. Lucas. 1840.
- Hadleigh Castle. Mezzotint. $10\frac{3}{4} \times 14\frac{3}{8}$. From the painting exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1829. Graves. 1849.
- Prints or proofs of the following small plates may be seen in the British Museum.
- The Approaching Storm. View on the Thames. Mezzotint. 3×438.

S. Hollyer. 1829.

- The Departing Storm. Sketch from Nature. Mezzotint. 3×48. S. Hollyer. 1829.
- A Shower (B. M. 1898. 11. 23. 6). Mezzotint. 3 × 4. This beautiful little plate was perhaps an experiment. An inscription on the Museum print says, 'Unpublished. Only two proofs printed.'
- Spring. Mezzotint. $3 \times 5\frac{1}{2}$. From the sketch at South Kensington, No. 144. Illustration to Leslie's Life of Constable, p. 5. Longmans. 1845.
- A Cottage in a Cornfield. Mezzotint. 2½ × 1¾. From the picture at South Kensington, No. 1631. Said to have been intended for an illustration to Leslie's Life of Constable.
- View on a Lake (B. M. 1878. 7. 13. 2032). Mezzotint. $4 \times 6\frac{1}{4}$. An inscription on the print in the British Museum gives this as Constable's work, but the design is so unlike him as to make the ascription exceedingly doubtful.

E. FREEBAIRN.

- Distant View of Salisbury. Line engraving. Vignette. $2\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$. From the sketch at South Kensington, No. 342a. Almost identical in composition with Constable's etching of 'Milford Bridge.'
- Oxford. Line engraving. Vignette. $3\frac{1}{2} \times 3$. This print is placed with Constable's work in the British Museum, but I have not seen the drawing for it. 1836.

W. R. SMITH.

A View on the River Stour near Dedham. Line engraving. 9×13. From the picture exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1822. E. and W. Finden. 1840.

E. FINDEN.

Warwick from the Kenilworth Road. Line engraving. $3\frac{1}{8} \times 4\frac{5}{8}$. I know this plate only from the proof in the British Museum.

S. WILLIAMS.

The Melancholy Jaques. Wood engraving. 5 × 4. From the drawing No. 4 in the British Museum. For 'The Seven Ages of Shakespeare,' Van Voorst. 1840.

C. COUSEN.

The Cornfield. Line engraving. $9\frac{8}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{4}$.

Virtue and Co.

J. C. BENTLEY.

The Valley Farm. Line engraving. 94×74.

Virtue and Co.

G. SANDERS.

The Valley Farm. Mezzotint. $22\frac{1}{2} \times 19\frac{1}{8}$.

Graves. 1875.

A. BRUNET DEBAINES.

The Valley Farm. Etching. $19\frac{3}{4} \times 16\frac{7}{8}$.

Goupil, 1878.

The Cornfield. Etching. 20 × 17.

Goupil. 1880.

The Watermill (Stratford Mill). Etching. $12\frac{3}{8} \times 18$.

Colnaghi. 1883.

The Haywain. Etching. $17\frac{1}{2} \times 24\frac{1}{4}$.

Goupil. 1884.

Opening the Lock. Etching. $17\frac{1}{2} \times 22$.

Colnaghi. 1885.

The Village of Foord. Etching. $5\frac{1}{8} \times 8\frac{3}{8}$. From a drawing formerly in the possession of the late W. W. May, R.I. Foord is probably Ford, near Arundel.

Buck and Reid. 1889.

Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop's Garden. Etching. 21 x 28. Agnew. 1896.

R. B. PARKES.

The Cornfield. Mezzotint. $22\frac{1}{2} \times 19\frac{1}{2}$.

Graves. 1879.

ALFRED LUCAS.

The Lane (The Cornfield). Mezzotint. 221 × 194.

McQueen. 1881.

The Lock. Mezzotint. $22\frac{1}{2} \times 19\frac{1}{4}$.

McQueen. 1881.

224

C. E. WILSON.

Dedham Mill, Essex. Etching. 7\frac{3}{8} \times 10\frac{3}{4}. From the picture at South Kensington, L'Art. No. 34.

C. E. HOLLOWAY.

Salisbury Cathedral (From the Bishop's Garden). Etching. 17 × 21. Colnaghi. 1883.

H. J. ANGLEY.

The Lock (Upright Composition). Etching. 17 × 14½. Colnaghi. 1885. Dedham Mill. Etching. 161 × 225. From the picture at South Kensington, Gladwell Brothers. 1886. No. 34.

DAVID LAW.

The Glebe Farm. Etching. 19 x 28.

Dowdeswell. 1889.

FRANK SHORT.

Flatford Lock. Mezzotint. $12\frac{7}{8} \times 17$. From a picture in the possession of Lady Gooden. 1889. Tate.

A Sussex Down (The Gleaners). Mezzotint. $5\frac{1}{2} \times 10$. From the painting in the National Gallery, No. 1817. Dunthorne, 1890.

J. B. PRATT.

The Haywain. Mezzotint. $19\frac{3}{4} \times 28\frac{1}{2}$. Leggatt. 1889. The Vale of Dedham. Mezzotint. $23 \times 19\frac{5}{8}$. Leggatt. 1890.

C. L. KRATKÉ.

Boussod Valadon. 1889. Salisbury Meadows. Etching. $11\frac{1}{2} \times 16$.

Hampstead Heath. Etching. 143 x 19. From the painting at South Kensington, Boussod Valadon. 1890.

The Shower. Etching. 8x11. I know of this plate only from the Catalogue of M. Knoedler. 1891. the Printsellers' Association.

WILLIAM HOLE.

The Jumping Horse. Etching. 21 x 281.

Dowdeswell. 1890.

V. FOCILLON.

A View on the River Stour. Etching. $7\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{1}{2}$. Paris. Hautecour. 1896.

H. R. ROBERTSON.

House at Hampstead. Etching. 13 × 101/2. From the picture in the National Art Union. 1901. Gallery, No. 1246.

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225

L. DESBROSSES.

The Cornfield. Etching. $9\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$. M. Ruet. N.D. The Valley Farm. Etching. $9\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$. M. Ruet. N.D. Salisbury from the Meadows. Etching. $7\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{3}{8}$. M. Ruet. N.D.

E. LESLIE HAYNES.

The Cornfield. Mezzotint. $22\frac{1}{2} \times 19\frac{1}{4}$. Graves. 1902.

A CATALOGUE

OF THE

VALUABLE

FINISHED WORKS,

STUDIES AND SKETCHES,

OF

JOHN CONSTABLE, ESQ. R.A.

DECEASED.

Among the Finished Pictures will be found the following Grand Subjects, all of which have been exhibited at the Royal Academy, and afford abundant evidence of the great genius and unwearied application of this distinguished and lamented Artist:

VIZ.

SALISBURY CATHEDRAL, from the Meadows
HADLEIGH CASTLE
VIEW ON THE RIVER STOUR
THE LOCK
VIEW OF DEDHAM, SUFFOLK
THE OPENING OF WATERLOO BRIDGE
HELMINGHAM PARK

SALISBURY CATHEDRAL, from the Bishop's Garden THE GLEBE FARM

FLATFORD MILLS
BRIGHTON CHAIN PIER
THE LOCK AT FLATFORD MILLS

LIKEWISE

A MOST INTERESTING COLLECTION OF

SKETCHES AND STUDIES.

ALSO,

A few Pictures by Old and Modern Masters.

Which will be Sold by Auction by

MESSRS. FOSTER AND SONS

At the Gallery, 54, Pall Mall,

On TUESDAY, the 15th of MAY, 1838, and following Day,

AT ONE O'CLOCK EACH DAY PRECISELY,

BY ORDER OF THE ADMINISTRATORS.

May be viewed Three Days prior to the Sale, and Catalogues (at is. each) had of H. D. HAVERFIELD, Esq., Solicitor, No. 3, Hart Street, Bloomsbury; and of Messrs. FOSTER, 14, Greek Street, Soho Square, and 54, Pall Mall.

First Day's Sale,

TUESDAY, the 15th Day of MAY, 1838,

AT ONE O'CLOCK PRECISELY.

OLD AND MODERN MASTERS.

OT

				1	LOT	
£4	8	0	ARTOIS .		I	A Landscape and figures.
3	5	0	Van Goyen		2	A Landscape with travellers in a cart.
1	12	6	D. Teniers		3	An Interior by candlelight; a pasticcio of Bassano.
3	10	0	Everdingen		4	A View of Norway and Waterfall.
3	10	0	Artois .		5	A Landscape.
22	I	0	R. Wilson	,	6	A pair of circular pictures — Old Castle and
						Waterfall; formerly in the possession of Sir
						George Beaumont.
28	7	0	DE WYTT.		7	An Interior of a Cathedral, with numerous
						figures—a chef d'œuvre.
6	6	0	SIR J. REYNOI	LDS	8	A Study for a Portrait of Admiral Hardy.
I	0	0	Poussin Le M	ERE	9	An Architectural Picture.
8	18	6	J. RUYSDAEL		10	A small Landscape with chateau.
4	14	6	Wynants.		11	A Landscape with trees and shrubs.
0	10	6	SIR J. REYNO	LDS	12	A Study for the Portrait of the Duchess of
						Northumberland,
7	7	0	VAN GOYEN		13	A Landscape with waggons descending a hill.
I	12	6	Snyders .		14	Still Life and a Stag Hunt.
4	14	6	J. RUYSDAEL		15	Woody Landscape and figures reposing.
5	5	0	J. RUYSDAEL		16	Landscape with cottage and figures.
ΙI	11	0	Everdingen		17	View in Norway.
0	18	0	S. Rosa .		18	Upright Landscape with Cupids; oval, style of
7	17	6	SIEBRECHTS		19	Upright Landscape with water and figures.
42	0	0	Watteau .		20	The Embarkation; formerly in the possession of
						Sir Joshua Reynolds.
2	0	0	Van Kessell	,	21	Upright Landscape, Van Goyen, and Birds in a
						Landscape.

			LOT	
£6	16	6	D. Teniers . 22	A Landscape with two figures in conversation.
ΙΙ	0	6	Momperts . 23	Mendicants round a fire in a wild Landscape, with lake, fine effect; from Sir W. Beechey's collection.
2	15	0	R. Wilson . 24	An Italian Landscape, manner of
4	8	0	BOUCHER 25	A Landscape and figures.
3	6	0	26	An upright Landscape with man trout-shooting (sic).
8	8	0	Guardi . 27	View of a Fountain and figures.
4	4	0	SWANEVELDT 28	An Italian Landscape and figures.
I	11	0	L. Cranach . 29	Venus and Cupid, a Sibyl, and Adam and Eve.
I	2	0	30	A Frost Piece and a Landscape.
5	15	6	31	A Classical Landscape with the story of Polyphemus, after N. Poussin.
¹ 6	16	6	Jackson, R.A. 32	Two Heads-the Banished Lord, etc.; after Sir
				J. Reynolds.
6	6	0	Jackson, R.A 33	A pair of Portraits, Sir George and Lady Beau-
				mont, after Sir J. Reynolds.
8	15	0	S. Bourdon . 34	A classical romantic Landscape and figures.
44	2	0	Guardi 35	Saint Mark's Place.
10	0	0	Rembrandt . 36	The Mill, after
10	10	0	Opie 37	Juliet at the Balcony.
I	I	0	SIR J. REYNOLDS 38	A Landscape, a sketch.
I	12	0	Opie 39	A Head.
2	8	0	Breughel . 40	Animals in a Landscape.
4	14	6	Borgognone . 41	Battle of Cavalry.
7	17	6	SIR G. BEAUMONT 42	Three Landscapes.
5	0	0	SIR G. BEAUMONT 43	
2	10	0	44	Five Pictures—the Entombment, three Landscapes and a Female Head.

COPIES BY MR. CONSTABLE.

LOT

²£15 15 0 45 A Winter Scene, from the original, by Jacob Ruysdael, in the possession of Sir Robert Peel.

6 16 0 46 Cephalus and Procris, from the original, by Claude, in the National Gallery.

1 Formerly in the possession of Mr. Henry Vaughan. One of these heads is in the possession of

Mr. T. B. Lewis; the other belongs to the Author.

2 Now in the possession of Mr. Edward Gambier Howe. The copy was made in September 1832.

⁸ Probably the copy made at Cole-Orton in 1823.

			LOT	
£5	15	6	47	The Windmill, from the original picture, by Jacob Ruysdael, in the
				Dulwich Gallery.
1 53	ΙI	0	48	Hagar and the Angel, from the original, by Claude, in the National
				Gallery.
² 45	3	0	49	An upright Landscape, from the original, by Claude, in the
				National Gallery.
4	4	0	50	A small upright Landscape, after Ruysdael.
3	10	0	51	An upright Landscape, after Artois.
9	9	0	52	The Corn Field, after Jacob Ruysdael.
8 7	17	6	53	Landscape and Cattle, after Rubens.

54 Five large prepared canvases and thirty-three smaller ditto.

END OF THE FIRST DAY'S SALE.

Second Day's Sale,

WEDNESDAY, the 16th Day of MAY, 1838.

PRECISELY AT ONE O'CLOCK.

SKETCHES, STUDIES, AND FINISHED PICTURES, BY MR. CONSTABLE.

			LOT		PURCHASER
£2	7	6	1	Five Landscapes, painted at an early period.	SWABEY.
3	IO	0	2	Six ditto, painted from nature.	Rev. W. FIELD.
4	14	6	3	Two-Stone Henge and an Exterior of a C	Country Mansion, with
				a Hatchment.	SMITH, Bond Street.
4	0	0	4	Eight Landscapes, painted from nature.	Haverfield.

¹ Constable copied this picture as early as 1799, but, judging from its price, the copy sold must have been a more mature work.

² Probably the copy made at Cole-Orton in 1823.

⁸ Leslie mentions that Constable made a sketch from a Rubens landscape when at Cole-Orton in 1823. Could the original have been the magnificent 'Autumn,' which Sir George Beaumont afterwards bequeathed to the National Gallery?

			LOT		PURCHASER
£,2	2	0	5	Seven slight Sketches.	AVERFIELD.
8	8	0	6	Four Landscapes.	FULHAM.
10	10	0	7	Four—Old Gate, Salisbury; House at Hampstead; Dedham, and one other.	View at Bell.
5	5	0	8	Six Landscapes.	Morris.
3	5	0	9	-	ITTLEDALE.
	15	0	10	Three—The Glebe Farm; Salisbury, and one other.	WILLIAMS.
_	12	6	11	Three-View of a Gentleman's House and Park in	Berkshire;
				Sea-Shore at Brighton, and a Study of Trees.	WILLIAMS.
9	9	0	12	Two-Salisbury Cathedral, study for the finished pi	cture, and
	-			Helmingham Park.	ALLNUTT.
24	3	0	13	Two-Salisbury Cathedral and the Glebe Farm.	CARPENTER.
9		6	14	Two-The Corn Field; a study from nature, for the	picture in
				the National Gallery, and Salisbury from the Meade	
					Radford.
16	5	6	15	Five sketches for pictures.	FIELD.
4	4	0	16	Four ditto.	ROCHARD.
4	4	0	17	Three ditto.	LESLIE.
2	12	6	18	Three ditto Brown, Lone	don Street.
8	8	0	19	Three Landscapes.	Morris.
16	5	6	20	An upright Landscape with Cows.	Morris.
2	2	0	21	A Landscape, study from nature.	WILLIAMS.
3	3	0	22	Three early studies of Landscapes.	Burton.
ΙΙ	11	0	23	Two—Salisbury Cathedral, and Coleorton Hall, the S George Beaumont.	eat of Sir Leslie.
17	6	6	24		ARCHBUTT.
		6	25	Three Landscapes.	PURTON.
8	15	0	26	View of Dedham, painted from nature.	BURTON.
	19	6	27	Two small Landscapes, early pictures.	TIFFIN.
-	13	0	28	A study of Trees, very elegant and highly finished.	LESLIE.
16	5	6	29	Sketch from a picture—View in Helmingham Park.	SWABEY.
	16	0	30	Salisbury Cathedral, from the Bishop's Garden, near	ly finished.
					Акснвитт.
3	13	6	31	Sketch of Hadleigh Castle. J. H. Smith, Gov	wer Street.
	15	0	32	Three Sketches.	WILLIAMS.
	3	0	3 3	Two Views at East Bergholt,	Archbutt.
	10	0	34	Three—Salisbury Cathedral, the Lock, and one other.	WILLIAMS.
	10	0	35		ARCHBUTT.
	I 2	0	36	Two-Sketch for the picture, View on the Stour, and	d a Land- Morris.
6	10	0	37	scape. Sketch of Salisbury Cathedral, from the Meadows.	WILLIAMS.
					21

			LOT	PURCHASER	
1£14	10	0	38	Two-Sketches of Landscapes, the pictures now in France. Purton.	
	17	6	39	Sketch of a Mill on the Stour. Hilditch.	
	10	0	40	Two—Sketch of the Opening of Waterloo Bridge, and Stoke Church. Ivv.	
4	4	0	41	Weymouth Bay, a sketch. Swabey.	
15	0	0	42	Two-Waterloo Bridge, and Brighton. ARCHBUTT.	
5	5	0	43	Two-Chain Pier at Brighton, and Dedham Church. STEWART.	
4	14	6	44	Two—Hampstead Heath, and Waterloo Bridge. Purton.	
7	7	0	45	Four—Weymouth Bay; Waterloo Bridge; Dedham Mill, and one other. BURTON.	
4	14	6	46	Three—East Bergholt; Dedham, and one other. Nursey.	
	13	0	47	Five—Weymouth Bay, and four others. WILLIAMS.	
	5	0	48	Three-Moonlight; Landscape, and a ditto, with a Rainbow.	
				Leslie.	
31	IO	0	49	Three sketches, Landscapes. Archbutt.	
35	14	0	50	Salisbury Meadows; painted from nature. Smith, Gower Street.	
23	2	0	51	Study of Trees and Fern; from Nature with Donkeys, etc.	
				Smith, Gower Street.	
27	6	0	52	Cottage in a Corn Field. Burton.	
37	5	6	53	Hampstead Heath, at the Ponds. Tiffin.	
52	10	0	54	Flatford Mills, Horse and Barge. Leslie.	
II	0	6	55	View near Flatford Mills. Rochard.	
17	6	6	56	Hampstead Heath. (? The Salt-Box, 1821.) Burton.	
37	16	0	57	Gillingham Mill, Dorsetshire. Leslie.	
5	15	6	58	View at East Bergholt. Nursey.	
51	9	0	59	View at Flatford, with barge building. SMITH, Lyall Street.	
7	7	0	60	Pair of Views in Sussex, near Petworth. Swabey.	
31	10	0	61	Hampstead Heath, London in the Distance. Archbutt.	
ΙI	0	6	62	Pencil drawing, Trees in Mr. Holford's Garden at Hampstead.	
				White, Junr.	
7	7	0	63	Pencil drawing, Trees at East Bergholt. White, Junr.	
I	15	0	64	Small pencil drawing of Trees. Stewart.	
25	4	0	65	Dedham Vale. Norton.	
63	0	0	66	View of London, from Hampstead Heath. Burton.	
34	13	0	67	VIEW OF FLATFORD MILLS. ALLNUTT.	
45	3	0	68	Brighton and the Chain Pier. Exhibited 1827. Tiffin.	
44	. 2	0	69	THE LOCK, near Flatford Mills. Archbutt.	
74	11	0	70	THE GLEBE FARM. Exhibited 1835. (The date should be 1827.)	
				Leslie.	

¹ These are said to have been the two large studies for 'The Haywain' and 'The Leaping Horse,' bequeathed to South Kensington Museum by Mr. Henry Vaughan.

£42	0	0	10T	PURCHASER THE CENOTAPH, erected by Sir George Beaumont to the Memory
			W 0	of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Exhibited 1836. CARPENTER.
64	1	0	72	Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop's Garden. Exhibited 1823. Tiffin.
56	14	0	73	View in Helmingham Park, Suffolk. Exhibited 1830. ALLNUTT.
_	0		74	THE OPENING OF WATERLOO BRIDGE. Exhibited 1832.
9	Ŭ		• ~	Moseley.
105	0	0	75	VIEW OF DEDHAM, SUFFOLK. Gipsies in the fore-ground.
				Exhibited 1828. Bohn.
1 131	5	0	76	THE LOCK; COMPANION TO THE PICTURE OF THE CORN FIELD,
Ü				NOW IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY, Exhibited 1824.
				Captain Birch.
157	10	0	77	VIEW OF THE RIVER STOUR, WITH WHITE HORSE
57				IN A BARGE. Exhibited 1819. Burton.
105	0	0	78	HADLEIGH CASTLE. Exhibited 1829. TIFFIN.
110			79	SALISBURY CATHEDRAL, from the MEADOWS.
	J			Exhibited 1831. Ellis.
45	3	0	80	DEDHAM MILL AND CHURCH. Brown.
78	15	0	81	ARUNDEL MILL AND CASTLE; the last picture Mr. Constable
	J			painted. Exhibited 1837. Constable.

EXTRA LOTS

21	0	0	82	Sketch, Waterloo Bridge.	Archbutt.
8	18	6	83	Sketch, Valley Farm.	LESLIE.
2	5	0	84	Landscape, Sir W. Beechey.	Ellis.
I	17	0	85	Pencil-drawing.	Tiffin.
Т	2	0	86	Sketch, Peter Martyr,	Williams.

The total realised by the two days' sale was £2620, 13s. 6d., of which £449, 4s. 2d. represented pictures bought in for the family by Mr. Burton, Mr. Leslie, and Mr. John Constable. The net result of the sale was thus little more than 2000 guineas. The last dozen lots alone in these days would be worth about thirty times that amount.

¹ This must have been the replica which Constable mentions making in November 1825.

APPENDIX C

FORGERIES OF CONSTABLE'S WORKS

ONSTABLE, like most other artists of rank, has had his talent acknowledged by a number of copyists and imitators. Even sixty years ago, when Leslie wrote, such imitations were common, and now it seems as if a so-called Constable were as necessary to any respectable sale of second-rate pictures as a so-called 'Old Crome.' Imitation Cromes, however, are easier to describe than imitation Constables. The styles of the various members of the

Norwich School, who are confused with their chief—John Berney Crome, Stark, Vincent, Ladbroke, and Paul—are each in their several ways distinctive, and therefore recognisable. The imitators of Constable are, as a rule, not only anonymous, but also far less consistent and capable workmen.

In this connection it may be well to quote the opinion of Captain Charles Constable, who had an intimate knowledge of his father's work, as well as no little experience of the practical part of painting. In 1869 three large pictures, 'Dedham Lock,' 'Salisbury,' and 'On the Stour,' were offered for sale at Messrs. Foster's, in Pall Mall, as genuine works by Constable. Their authenticity was at once doubted, they were withdrawn from sale, and are supposed to have been burned afterwards in the Pantechnicon. When the discussion about them was raised, Captain Constable expressed himself thus:—

'For one genuine picture offered for sale there are six sham ones. I have seen them at auctions, at dealers, and in the houses of gentlemen who have been imposed upon; and I have come to the conclusion that there is a manufactory for them somewhere. They are nearly always made up from the Mezzotint engravings by David Lucas from my father's pictures. But these imitators seem not to know that Constable's works are each known to artists and admirers, and are catalogued, and cannot be repeated without detection, notwithstanding the variations artfully introduced; moreover, it has not occurred to them that Constable could draw, and was also a colourist.'

Fortunately the pictures by Constable in our public galleries are not only representative and numerous, but, with two or three exceptions, are quite above suspicion. Of the two works attributed to Constable which form part of the Ashbee bequest to

FORGERIES OF CONSTABLE'S WORKS

South Kensington Museum, one does not contain a trace of Constable's manner at any period of his life. The other is a painting by some rather heavy-handed professional—possibly by the versatile Callcott. The conventional treatment of the foliage is enough to prove that Constable had nothing to do with it. The 'Kenilworth,' belonging to the Corporation of Liverpool, in spite of its clever foreground, seemed to me to have been wrongly attributed to Constable, but I have seen it only under conditions which made a close examination impossible.

The difficulty of dealing with doubtful pictures by Constable is increased by the fact that many of his sketches, and a few of his larger works, were finished by other hands after his death. Those who have studied Constable's technique at all carefully should have no difficulty in detecting such additions. The foreground of a picture is the part which an artist usually leaves to the last, so the foreground of a doubtful picture is the first thing to be examined. Now, even a skilful landscape painter finds a foreground a most difficult thing to do well, especially when the sky and distance are as forcible as Constable usually made them. The forger, in consequence, has to fall back upon safe browns and vague fumbled shadows to fill the inconvenient vacancy. Constable, too, though he often started his foregrounds in brown, almost always finished them with solid pigment. The sketch of 'Hampstead Heath,' left to the National Gallery by Mr. Henry Vaughan, shows what Constable's foregrounds were like before they received their final scumbles and glazes of fresh colour.

The works of other painters are not often confused with those of Constable, since his feeling and handling were so personal. Some sketches and paintings by F. W. Watts resemble him superficially, and are sometimes sold as genuine Constables, but any close comparison with the real thing would show them to be far more spotty in effect, more monotonous in touch, more uniformly thin and timid in pigment, and far more limited or garish in colour. Clever sketches by other artists, sometimes by men still living, are also now and then attributed to Constable.

To classify his deliberate imitators would be almost impossible. The most old-fashioned of these was evidently an admirer of Sir Francis Bourgeois and Sir George Beaumont. The last work I saw from his hand was an ingenious compound of two Lucas plates, the big 'Dedham Vale' and the little 'Summer Morning,' worked out in strong transparent brown. Above he had added a coarse blue sky, with round, solid white clouds. The whole had then been toned with a rich brown glaze. By some authorities these copies are attributed to that versatile member of the Norwich School, 'Old Paul.'

A more plausible imitator manages fairly well in his clumsy, heavy-handed way till he gets to the foreground, where he has to insert two round trees side by side, one of bright liquid green, the other of an equally bright brown. Occasionally the brown tree appears alone. This gentleman usually paints on an imposing scale, where the opacity of his shadows is less noticeable than it would be in small works.

A picture of 'Salisbury Cathedral in a Storm,' sold at Christie's some three years ago, displayed the hand of a far more artistic creator. The general scheme was dark

FORGERIES OF CONSTABLE'S WORKS

bluish green, the lights being plastered on (more vigorously than accurately) with a palette-knife, and the whole was skilfully finished with a universal cool glaze. It was a shoddy thing, of course, for no real drawing underlay the *bravura* of the manipulation, but the light and shade were well disposed, and the colour was quite charming.

The difference between such a work and a true Constable could be seen at once by a comparison with Mr. Orrock's large sketch, 'The Keeper's Cottage.' When this was exhibited at Burlington House in 1893, it raised a storm of discussion, in which Mr. G. D. Leslie, R.A., took a prominent part. No one, however, who understands Constable's spirit and method can, I think, have a doubt as to the authenticity of this powerful and brilliant study. The purity of its colour, and the transparency of its shadows, distinguish it at once from the muddy, heavy work of the average forger. A still more convincing proof of its genuineness may be found in the amazing power of drawing with the palette-knife which its maker must have possessed. Look, for instance, at the donkey in front, and note with what certainty, and accuracy, and force the blots of black and white that make the beast are applied. The variety, beauty, and freedom of the cloud-forms also are qualities which only Constable's knowledge, daring, and skill could attain so simply and so forcibly.

Decent copies of Constable's pictures are scarce, perhaps because his technique is not half so simple as it looks. The best I have seen was a copy of 'The Cottage,' in the Louvre, done by some skilful French landscape painter—the handling recalls Daubigny. A far feebler imitation of the Sheepshanks' 'Hampstead Heath,' at South Kensington, was sold with the collection of Mr. Alexander Ionides, and fetched a fair price.

As Captain Constable noticed, the usual repertory of the forger is confined to the small prints by Lucas. Sometimes these imitations are really skilful. A version of the 'Windmill near Colchester' was recently (March 1902) sold at Christie's. It was so soundly painted, though the colour was restricted to cool greys and browns, that it realised quite a high price. I have also seen most admirable and dexterous copies of the 'View on the Stour' and 'The Lock.' These forgeries, done from the Lucas mezzotints, are, as a class, far less objectionable than the more ambitious imitations of Constable's style. The original designs are so good that even the blunders of the unlucky men who have had to make their living by copying them cannot spoil them entirely. The name of a fairly well-known landscape painter of the last century is usually associated with the best of these imitations, which have found their way into more than one famous collection.

Constable's pencil-drawings and water-colours do not at present seem to be worth forging, and I can only remember seeing one drawing wrongly attributed to him.

In reality, these copies and forgeries are far less formidable than they might seem to be from the space I have devoted to them. Their artistic worthlessness is, as a rule, so obvious that anybody accustomed to good pictures should be able to detect their falsity at a glance. Nevertheless a few practical hints on the subject may not be out of place.

FORGERIES OF CONSTABLE'S WORKS

In buying very early or very late pictures, or replicas of engraved compositions, it would be well to have an independent opinion from some one who has made a special study of Constable, but it is unwise to buy any work purporting to belong to his maturity, whatever its pedigree, which—

- (i) Contains a definitely brown tree among green trees or a soft washy brown foreground. 'The Cenotaph,' 'The Valley Farm,' and the 'Hampstead Heath' sketch in the National Gallery show the extreme limits of Constable's use of that convenient colour.
- (ii) Is glazed with brown all over. Constable glazed freely, but did so most delicately, and almost always with cool colour. It is not uncommon to see genuine sketches which have been 'toned' with warm glazes by other hands, and so have lost all their original freshness.
- (iii) Has uniformly rounded clouds, with shadows that are not most delicately varied in colour, luminous, and translucent.
- (iv) Is signed J. C. Even Constable's full signature rarely appears except upon large finished works. Genuine sketches have often the day of the month roughly marked upon them.
- (v) Depicts barges that are lop-sided, windmills that couldn't go round, or locks that couldn't be opened without causing a flood.

Note.—One technical quality may perhaps be mentioned here in which almost all imitations of Constable's painting differ from the real thing. I refer to the special way in which Constable worked with the palette-knife. His imitators appear usually to have mixed their tints carefully on their palettes before applying them. They then lay on the mixture with the palette-knife in broad masses, often with long touches that suggest form. The paint is used rather wet and is rounded at the edges. Now Constable used the palette-knife chiefly to get brightness of tone and freshness of colour, so he lays on the paint, often in the state in which it comes from the tube, in small spots, dabs, and scrapes to accentuate work previously done with the brush. His handiwork is thus usually drier, more broken, and sometimes more shapeless than that of his imitators—but the result, on the other hand, is infinitely sharper and more luminous. Now and then he does use long sweeps of the knife with splendid effect, as in 'The Leaping Horse,' but as a rule he employs short, quick touches of pure pigment to avoid lowering the pitch of his colour by any mixing. Imitations are thus not only smoother in surface and sloppier in substance, but also heavier and muddier in effect than genuine pictures.

APPENDIX D

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF CONSTABLE'S CHIEF PICTURES AND DATED SKETCHES

NOTE. -This list contains, with two or three exceptions, only the pictures and sketches which have been personally examined by the Author. Water-colours and pencil studies done after the year 1806 are not included except when dated. Sketches, replicas, and variations of important compositions, when undated, are mentioned under the heading of the finished work with which they are connected. Where measurements are given, the height precedes the width. Works undated by the Artist himself, or by conclusive external evidence, are marked by an asterisk.

1795

PLACES VISITED—London, Suffolk. PICTURES, etc.

Exhibited 77 CORNHILL, 1899—A Study after Claude.

Sepia.

The earliest dated work of Constable with which I am acquainted. It was placed in an album with a number of later drawings.

1796

PLACES VISITED-London, Suffolk.

PICTURES, etc.

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM — Four Sketches of Cottages (358a, b, c, d). Pen and Ink.

1797

PLACES VISITED-London, Suffolk.

In 1797 Constable copied a battlepiece by Tempesta, and painted two small pictures in oil—A Chymist and An Alchymist—which have apparently disappeared.

PICTURES, etc.

 $\begin{array}{c} \text{South Kensington Museum-*} A\ \textit{Village Green}\ (625). \\ \text{Pen and Water-Colour.} \\ \text{Sir J. C. Robinson}\ (\text{Sold, April 21st, 1902})- \overset{\text{**}}{\text{**}} A\ \textit{Road} \\ \textit{and Cottages}\ , 4\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{4}. \\ \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{c} \text{Pen and Ink.} \end{array}$

1798

PLACES VISITED-Suffolk.

PICTURES, etc.

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM—*Exterior of East Bergholt Church (201). Pen and Pale Water-Colour. Probably a study for the following, with which it is nearly identical.

Exhibited 77 CORNHILL, 1899—*East Bergholt Church
(No. 55). Oil.
From the Collection of Captain Charles Constable.

1799

PLACES VISITED-London, Suffolk.

In 1799 Constable, in addition to his studies at the Royal Academy, copied a small landscape of A. Carracci, two pictures by Wilson, a Ruysdael, and Sir G. Beaumont's little Claude 'Hagar and Ishmael' (National Gallery, No. 61).

PICTURES, etc.

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM-*Coast Scene (197).

*Sketch on the Orwell (?) (833). Pen and Indian Ink.

Sir J. C. Robinson (Sold, April 21st, 1902)—*On the
Stour (Trees near Flatford Mill). 7\frac{1}{2} \times 9. Pencil.

*A Woody Road with Peasant. 6\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{1}{2}.

Chalk on Blue Paper.
Exhibited 77 CORNHILL, 1899—*Fountains Abbey (No.

From the Collection of Captain Charles Constable. Apparently a clumsy copy from some second-rate English picture.

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST

1800

PLACES VISITED-London, Bergholt, Helmingham

PICTURES, etc.

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM—*Study of the Nude Male Figure (44'73). Black and White Chalk. Exhibited 77 CORNHILL, 1899—*The Harvest Field.

From the Collection of Captain Constable, 1899. Apparently a reminiscence of Gainsborough. Etched

in reverse by the artist on a small scale. Sir J. C. Robinson (Sold, April 21st, 1902) -*A Woody Road with Peasant. $7\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{4}$. Pencil. Strongly reminiscent of Gainsborough.

1801

PLACES VISITED-London, Derbyshire.

Constable mentions that in 1801 he made a copy of a portrait, and painted 'a background to an ox for Miss Linwood,' presumably the artist in needle-work who exhibited in Leicester Square.

PICTURES, etc.

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM-Twelve Sketches in Derbyshire, Edensor, Haddon Hall, Chatsworth, etc. (247, 247a, b, c, d, e, f, g, 601, 602, 610, 805).

Pencil and Wash.

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY—* Portrait of the
Artist.

Exhibited at Convey. Artist. Pencil and Red Chalk.
Exhibited 77 CORNHILL, 1899—On the Derwent, near
Bakewell (No. 56) Oil.

Near Bakewell, Derbyshire (No. 60).

These smooth, thin, clever sketches are the earliest attempts by Constable at painting in naturalistic colour which I have seen.

MAX ROSENHAIN, Esq.—* View in Helmingham Park.

32 × 22.

In the manner of Gainsborough. Probably done from sketches made in 1800.

Messrs. Shepherd Brothers, King Street, S.W., 1901. —Study of a Horse. 16\frac{1}{2} \times 15.

In the manner of Gainsborough.

1802

PLACES VISITED-London, Windsor, Suffolk.

EXHIBITED-

ROYAL ACADEMY-A Landscape.

PICTURES, etc.

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM-Three drawings of Windsor and Eton (239, 803, 804). Dated May 1802. Pencil and Faint Colour Evening (587). Dated July.

Dedham Vale (124). Dated September. This early sketch is practically identical in composition with the large picture of the subject exhibited in 1828.

A Windmill (841). Dated October 3.

Black Chalk and Wash.

Messrs. Shepherd Brothers, King Street, S.W., 1901

—* Stratford St. Mary. 10×13.

An interesting specimen of Constable's early efforts at realism, which might be compared with the Dedham Vale above mentioned, and the two oil sketches made in Derbyshire in 1801.

Sir J. C. ROBINSON (Sold, April 21st, 1902).—*Landscape with cow. 5\frac{3}{8} \times 7\frac{1}{2}.

Apparently a reminiscence of Girtin.

G. SALTING, Esq.—*Willy Lott's Cottage (?).

Oil.

Probably painted about the same time as the
South Kensington Dedham Vale, which it strongly resembles.

1803

PLACES VISITED-London, Rochester, Deal, Dover, Ipswich, Yarmouth (?).

EXHIBITED-

ROYAL ACADEMY-Two Landscapes and two Studies from Nature.

PICTURES, etc.

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM-Shipping on the Med-Pencil.

Shipping on the Medway (806, 807, 808, 809, 810). Pencil and Wash.

Shipping on the Medway (829, 830, 831).

Black Chalk.

Off the North Foreland (180). Pen and Pale Colour. All these sketches of sea and shipping were made in April.

Sketch of Cows and Trees (627). Dated June 28th.

Pencil and Pale Colour. Apparently an imitation of Gainsborough.

View on the Orwell at Ipswich (626). Dated October 5th. Pencil and Pale Colour. 5th.

1804

PLACES VISITED-London, Suffolk.

PICTURES, etc.

South Kensington Museum-* Sketch in a Wood

* A Valley Scene with Trees (142). * Study of Trees (843).

Chalk.

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF CONSTABLE'S

BRANTHAM CHURCH, SUFFOLK-Christ Blessing little

This picture has been removed from its original place over the altar, and now hangs on the north wall of the church opposite the door.

H. P. HORNE, Esq. *A Park Scene with Trees. 111 1 17 17 1 . I Reminiscent of Gainsborough and of Girtin. Pencil.

1805

PLACES VISITED-London

EXHIBITED-

ROYAL ACADEMY-Landscape, Moonlight.

PICTURES, etc.

NATIONAL GALLERY-* On Barnes Common (1066).

From the Garle Sale 1862 and the Anderdon Sale 1879; 36 guineas.

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM-Study of Trees (598). Water-Colour. Dated November 3rd. Study of Trees (595). Water-Colour. Apparently an imitation of Gainsborough.

MAX ROSENHAIN, Esq.—* Landscape (Malvern Hall?)

The title appears to be incorrect. Constable does not seem to have painted Malvern Hall till 1820. An imitation of Girtin.

Messrs Shepherd Brothers, King Street, S.W., 1901 * A Windmill on a Hill. 11 × 14. An imitation of Girtin.

Exhibited 77 CORNHILL, 1899-*A Fresh Breeze off Yarmouth (No. 46). Like the Barnes Common this work is an excellent example of Constable's mastery of Dutch technique.

1806

PLACES VISITED-London, Suffolk, The Lake District. EXHIBITED-

ROYAL ACADEMY-His Majesty's Ship Victory in the Battle of Trafalgar, between two French Ships of the Line. (See below.)

PICTURES, etc.

South Kensington Museum-His Majesty's Ship Victory in the Battle of Trafalgar, between two French Ships of the Line (169). Water-Colour. Constable sketched the Victory three times at Chatham in 1803. The subject was suggested to him by the story of a Suffolk man who had been on the ship during the battle.

Four Sketches of East Bergholt Church (200, 343, 344, 346). Dated June. Water-Colour. Doorway of East Bergholt Church (224). Dated June Water-Colour.

Indian Ink. Leathes Water (194). Mezzotinted by Henry Dawe, and published by Constable in 1815.

Helvellyn and the Vale of St. John (348). Dated Water-Colour. September 21st. Saddleback and part of Skiddaw (Lonscale Fell) (794). Dated September 21st. Water-Colour View in Borrowdale (192). Dated September 25th.

Water-Colour. View in Borrowdale (185). Dated October 2nd. Water-Colour.

View in Borrowdale (181). Dated October 4th. Water-Colour.

Derwentwater and Lodore (179). Dated October 6th. Water-Colour.

View in Borrowdale (183). Dated October 18th. Water-Colour. View in Langdale (1256). Dated October 19th.

Indian Ink View in Langdale (1257). Indian Ink. Water-Colour. View in Borrowdale (187). Bridge at Grange (188). Water-Colour. Bridge at Grange (193). Water-Colour. Water-Colour. View in Borrowdale (182). View in Borrowdale (184). Water-Colour. View in Cumberland (Watendlath Tarn ?) (177). Water-Colour.

Water-Colour. Mountain Scene (349). A Rocky Scene in Cumberland (596). Water-Colour. View in Borrowdale (170). Water-Colour. Water-Colour. Lodore (178). Lodore (811, 812). Indian Ink. Mountain Scene (Wetherlam?) (186). Water-Colour * Landscape-Sunset (592). Water-Colour. * A Wooden Bridge over the Stour (593)

Water-Colour. * Landscape with a Church Tower in the distance (Dedham from East Bergholt) (599).

Water-Colour. * Landscape with Buildings in the distance (214). Water-Colour.

* Sandbank and Trees (798).

Pencil and Water-Colour. BRITISH MUSEUM-A Mourner (39b). Dated April Pen and Ink 19th. Sophia (36b). Dated June 11th. Pencil

Cf. Nos. 36a, and 37-43. H. P. HORNE, Esq.-Kendal Castle. 42×71. Dated Water-Colour. September 1st. Whitbarrow Scar. 61 × 9. Dated September 2nd.

Water-Colour. Helvellyn in Cumberland. 8 × 1412. Water-Colour.

A failure owing to bad paper.

Sir T. Gibson Carmichael, Bart. (Sold, May 10th, 1902)—A Hilly Landscape—Ashcourse (Esk Hause?). Dated October 12th. Water-Colour. Constable has written below this drawing, 'The finest Scenery that ever was.

MAX ROSENHAIN, Esq.-*On the Stour near Flatford.

In the manner of Girtin. *View in the Lake District. 93 × 15. Oil. Exhibited 77 CORNHILL, 1899-Near Keswick, Cumber-Oil land (No. 52).

At Keswick, Cumberland (No. 66). Thin, smooth, and clever experiments in bright natural colour. Their style is thus absolutely dif-ferent from the other paintings and drawings of

- THE AUTHOR-*Farm Buildings and Trees. 81 × 12.
 - *Sunset. 10½×11. Oil.

 Both these little pictures are executed in the manner of Girtin, though the looser handling of the Sunset seems to indicate that it is the later in date of the two.
- Sir J. C. ROBINSON (Sold, April 21st, 1902)—Landscape with Trees (mountain scene with figures). .4×7. Pencil.
- at the Royal Academy in this year. The scene is apparently the northern end of Borrowdale. The picture is notable as being the largest work hitherto executed by Constable in a naturalistic style. The cattle represented in it are horned. Constable's almost invariable practice was to paint the hornless Suffolk breed.
- Sir J. C. ROBINSON (Sold, April 21st, 1902)—St. Mary's
 Church, Colchester. 4×6. October 29th.
 Colchester Castle. 4×6. October 29th.
 Pencil.

1807

PLACES VISITED—London, Suffolk, Birmingham (?). EXHIBITED—

ROYAL ACADEMY—A View in IVestmerland; Keswick Lake (see below); Bow Fell, Westmerland. In 1807 Constable spent much time in copying family portraits for Lord Dysart.

PICTURES, etc.

- THE AUTHOR—Keswick Lake. 9½×16½ Oil.

 View of Derwentwater and Skiddaw from the foot of Cat Bells. Probably the picture exhibited at the Royal Academy.
- ALEXANDER YOUNG, Esq.—*A Bridge over the Mole.
- A singularly modern-looking example of Constable's early efforts at realism.
- MISS LLOYD—*Sophia Lloyd and Child. 26 × 31½. Oil. *Charles Lloyd, Esq. 20½ × 24½. Oil.

 The date of these portraits can be approximately fixed by the age of the child represented. Family tradition states that they were painted at Birmingham, in discharge of some obligation to Mr. Lloyd, but no record of the visit remains.

1809

PLACES VISITED—London, Suffolk, Twyford.

- ROYAL ACADEMY-Three Landscapes.
- BRITISH GALLERY—Borrowdale; A Cottage; Keswick

PICTURES, etc.

- NayLand Church, Suffolk—Christ blessing the Elements—Altarpiece. Oil.
- NATIONAL GALLERY—*Dedham Vale (1822), Oil.
 TATE GALLERY—*View of the House in which the
 Artist was Born (1235). Oil.
- SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM—*East Bergholt Church and Golding Constable's House (583). Oil. Near East Bergholt, Suffolk—Evening (585). Oil. Mezzotinted by David Lucas.
- Mezzotinted by David Lucas.

 *View on the Orwell, near Ipswich (160).

 Oil.

 Mezzotinted by David Lucas. A replica is in the possession of Mr. Alexander Young, of Black-
- the possession of Mr. Alexander Young, of Black-heath.

 G. A. PHILLIPS, Esq.—*At East Bergholt, Suffolk—
- Dawn.

 One of Constable's very finest works in the manner
- of the Old Masters.
 Exhibited 77 CORNHILL, 1899—A Shower, East Bergholt
 (No. 23). Dated October 10th. Oil.
- Sir J. C. ROBINSON (Sold, April 21st, 1902)—Houses at Twyford. 3\frac{3}{4} \times 6. Dated June 25th. Pencil.

1808

PLACES VISITED—London, Surrey, Suffolk, Essex. EXHIBITED—

- ROYAL ACADEMY—Borrowdale (see below); A Scene in Cumberland; Windermere Lake.
- BRITISH GALLERY—A Scene in Westmorland; Moon-light: A Study.

PICTURES, etc.

- NATIONAL GALLERY—*View at Epsom (1818). Oil GEORGE SALTING, Esq.—*At Stoke-by-Nayland. Oil. LIONEL PHILLIPS, Esq.—*Mountain Scene. 24 × 30.
 - Possibly identical with one of the pictures exhibited

1810

PLACES VISITED—London, Suffolk, Hampshire. EXHIBITED—

ROYAL ACADEMY—A Landscape; A Churchyard. (See under 1811.)

PICTURES, etc

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM—Trees and Cottages (324). Dated August 6th, Oil.

outh Kensington Museum (continued)— *View of Dedham, Suffolk, from East Bergholt (134). Oil.	Rebow's daughter. He also repainted a Hoppner for Lady Louisa Manners, and copied a portrait for Lady Heathcote.
*Head of a Girl (1255). *View of Dedham Vale, Suffolk (321). Oil. Possibly the sketch Constable is said to have made from the top of Langham Church tower. *Porch of East Bergholt Church (138). Oil. Probably a study for the picture in the Tate Gallery (1245), exhibited in 1811. *On the Stour near Dedham (325). JAMES ORROCK, Esq.—*Golding Constable's House. East Bergholt. 19½×29. Oil.	PICTURES, etc. SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM—East Bergholt Church, Suffolk (842). Dated June 29th. Black Chalk. An Upland Park Scene (146). Dated July 7th. Oil. Landscape with Double Rainbow (328). Dated July 28th. Oil. View near Salisbury (236). Dated August 2nd. Pencil. Hayfield in Suffolk (East Bergholt), Sunset (121). Oil. *Netwinnal Sunset (127). Oil. *Autumnal Sunset (127). Oil. Mezzotinted by David Lucas. *A Bouquet of Flowers (331). Oil.

1811

PLACES VISITED-London, Suffolk, Salisbury, Stourhead.

EXHIBITED-

ROYAL ACADEMY-Twilight. Dedham Vale. BRITISH GALLERY-A Church Porch. (See below.)

PICTURES, etc.

TATE GALLERY, MILLBANK-Church Porch, Bergholt, Suffolk (1245).

Probably identical with the picture above men-tioned, and possibly with the 'Churchyard,' exhibited at the Academy in 1810. A water-colour sketch of the subject, 8 × 58, was sold in Sir J. C. Robinson's Collection, April 21st, 1902.

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM-A Village Fair (128).

Landscape and Cart (326). Oil. Salisbury Cathedral (825). Cf. No. 832. Pencil. NATIONAL GALLERY-* The Mill Stream, Flatford

Mezzotinted by David Lucas. SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM-*View on the Stour Flatford Mill (135).

There is a similar study in the Diploma Gallery, Burlington House, a rather larger version in the Collection of Mr. Alexander Young, and a third in that of Mr. George Salting.

Sir J. C. Robinson (Sold, April 21st, 1902).—Stourhead.

3³/₄ × 6. Dated October 2nd. Pencil.

1812

PLACES VISITED-London, Suffolk, Salisbury. EXHIBITED-

ROYAL ACADEMY-View of Salisbury-Flatford Mill and two small Landscapes.

In 1812 Constable painted portraits of Bishop Fisher, of his uncle, Mr. Watts, and of General

1813

PLACES VISITED-London, Suffolk.

EXHIBITED-

ROYAL ACADEMY-Landscape: Boys Fishing. Landscape: Mowing.

BRITISH GALLERY—Landscape.

In 1813 Constable painted a portrait of the Rev. G. Bridgman, and began a portrait of Lady Lennard which was never finished.

PICTURES, etc.

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM - Small Sketch-Book 'Bergholt,' etc. (317).

1814

PLACES VISITED-London, Kelvedon, Maldon, Rochford, Southend, Hadleigh, Danbury, Bergholt.

EXHIBITED-

ROYAL ACADEMY—A Ploughing Scene in Suffolk.

Bought in the Exhibition by Mr. J. Allnutt.

It fetched 98 guineas at his Sale in 1863, and may perhaps be identified with the picture, 102 × 14, that fetched 290 guineas at the Johnstone Sale in 1878. A Ferry.

BRITISH GALLERY-Two Marten Cats.

PICTURES, etc.

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM-Study of Flowers (582). Dated July 26th.

Two Views of Golding Constable's House (437).

October 2nd and October 3rd.

Pencil. Cf. No. 623. View at East Bergholt from the Garden of Golding Constable's House. Pencil. A Cart and Horses (333). Dated October 24th. Cf. No. 332.

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM (continued)—	1816
Studies of Ploughs (789). Dated November 2nd. Oil.	PLACES VISITED-London, Suffolk, Wivenhoe Park,
Small Sketch Book (1259), containing first sketch of 'A View on the Stour,' exhibited in 1822. *Spring (144). Oil.	Weymouth, Netley.
*Spring (144). Oil. Possibly a sketch for the picture exhibited at the	EXHIBITED—
Royal Academy. Mezzotinted by David Lucas. The mill represented is said to be one in which the	ROYAL ACADEMY—A Wheatfield (see below); A Wood: Autumn (Bought by Mr. D. P. Watts).
Artist himself worked. *Study of Flowers (581). Cf. No. 582. Oil.	PICTURES, etc.
*Cart and Horses, with Carter and Dog (332). Cf. No. 333.	NATIONAL GALLERY—*A Cornfield with Figures (1065). Oil.
	Possibly the picture exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1816, and at the British Gallery in 1817. Bought: Anderdon Sale, 1879, 26 guineas.
	SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM—Osmington Bay (311). Dated November 7th. Cf. No. 791. Pencil. Portland Island (628). Dated November 20th. Pencil and Water-Colour.
1815	Preston Church, near Weymouth (303). Cf. No. 791.
PLACES VISITED-London, Suffolk, Harwich.	Dated November 21st. Pencil. East Window of Netley Abbey (823). Cf. Nos. 268,
EXHIBITED-	606, and 613. Pencil. No. 268 was the original sketch for Constable's
ROYAL ACADEMY—Boatbuilding (see below); A View of Dedham; A Village in Suffolk; A Landscope; A Sketch; and three Drawings. BRITISH GALLERY—Landscape.	etching of the subject. He also made a study in oil from it late in life which was exhibited at 77 Cornhill in 1899 (No. 9).
During the summer of 1815 Constable painted a landscape background for a picture at Mr. Dawe's. Mr. R. C. Leslie states that the picture was a portrait of Miss O'Neil as Juliet at the	
Garrick Club. The background of the portrait there by Joseph does not, however, look like Constable's work.	
PICTURES, etc.	1817
SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM—Boatbuilding, near Flatford Mill (37). Oil.	I 817 PLACES VISITED—London, Suffolk, Wivenhoe Park.
SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM—Boatbuilding, near Flatford Mill (37). Exhibited Royal Academy, 1815. Sold Con- stable Sale, 1838, Lot 59, for 49 guineas. From the	PLACES VISITED—London, Suffolk, Wivenhoe Park. EXHIBITED—
SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM—Boatbuilding, near Flatford Mill (37). Oil. Exhibited Royal Academy, 1815. Sold Con-	PLACES VISITED—London, Suffolk, Wivenhoe Park. EXHIBITED— ROYAL ACADEMY—Wivenhoe Park; A Cottage (see under 1818); Portrait of Archdeacon Fisher; A Scene on a Navigable River. (See below.)
SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM—Boatbuilding, near Flatford Mill (37). Exhibited Royal Academy, 1815. Sold Constable Sale, 1838, Lot 59, for 49 guineas. From the Sheepshanks Collection. View in Wimbledon Park (305). Dated July 3rd.	PLACES VISITED—London, Suffolk, Wivenhoe Park. EXHIBITED— ROYAL ACADEMY—Wivenhoe Park; A Cottage (see under 1818); Portrait of Archdeacon Fisher; A Scene on a Navigable River. (See below.) BRITISH GALLERY—A Harvest Field with Reapers and Gleaners (? from R.A. 1816).
SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM—Boatbuilding, near Flatford Mill (37). Exhibited Royal Academy, 1815. Sold Constable Sale, 1838, Lot 59, for 49 guineas. From the Sheepshanks Collection. View in Wimbledon Park (305). Dated July 3rd. Pencil. Drawn on the back of a visiting card. Shipping near Ipswich (308). Dated August 5th. Pencil. Wheatsheaves at East Bergholt (827). Dated August	PLACES VISITED—London, Suffolk, Wivenhoe Park. EXHIBITED— ROYAL ACADEMY—Wivenhoe Park; A Cottage (see under 1818); Portrait of Archdeacon Fisher; A Scene on a Navigable River. (See below.) BRITISH GALLERY—A Harvest Field with Reapers
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SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM—Boatbuilding, near Flatford Mill (37). Exhibited Royal Academy, 1815. Sold Constable Sale, 1838, Lot 59, for 49 guineas. From the Sheepshanks Collection. View in Wimbledon Park (305). Dated July 3rd. Pencil. Drawn on the back of a visiting card. Shipping near Ipswich (308). Dated August 5th. Pencil. Wheatsheaves at East Bergholt (827). Dated August 15th. Pencil. Overbury Hall, Suffolk (300). Dated August 20th.	PLACES VISITED—London, Suffolk, Wivenhoe Park. EXHIBITED— ROYAL ACADEMY—Wivenhoe Park; A Cottage (see under 1818); Portrait of Archdeacon Fisher; A Scene on a Navigable River. (See below.) BRITISH GALLERY—A Harvest Field with Reapers and Gleaners (? from R.A. 1816). PICTURES, etc. NATIONAL GALLERY—Flatford Mill on the River Stour (1273). Signed and dated. Perhaps identical with the 'Scene on a Navigable River' exhibited at the Royal Academy in this year. Bought in at Constable's Sale in 1838 (No. 67) for
SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM—Boatbuilding, near Flatford Mill (37). Exhibited Royal Academy, 1815. Sold Constable Sale, 1838, Lot 59, for 49 guineas. From the Sheepshanks Collection. View in Wimbledon Park (305). Dated July 3rd. Pencil. Drawn on the back of a visiting card. Shipping near Ipswich (308). Dated August 5th. Pencil. Wheatsheaves at East Bergholt (827). Dated August 15th. Overbury Hall, Suffolk (300). Dated August 20th. Pencil. On the Shore near Harwich (302). Dated August 22nd. Sketch for 'Harwich Lighthouse.' Exhibited	PLACES VISITED—London, Suffolk, Wivenhoe Park. EXHIBITED— ROYAL ACADEMY—Wivenhoe Park; A Cottage (see under 1818); Portrait of Archdeacon Fisher; A Scene on a Navigable River. (See below.) BRITISH GALLERY—A Harvest Field with Reapers and Gleaners (? from R.A. 1816). PICTURES, etc. NATIONAL GALLERY—Flatford Mill on the River Stour (1273). Signed and dated. Perhaps identical with the 'Scene on a Navigable River' exhibited at the Royal Academy in this year.
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SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM (continued)— View in Wivenhoe Park, Essex (611). Dated August

Trees at East Bergholt: By Flatford Mill (256) Pencil

Dated October 17th. Pencil.

A Study near the foreground of the Picture of Flatford Mill in the National Gallery (No. 1273). Study of Trees at East Bergholt (320), dated October

22nd. Exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1818 Bought in at the Constable Sale (No. 63), 1838, for 7 guineas.

*Trees and Cottages (136).

Oil.

This date is only tentative: the style of the sketch affords no definite clue to the time at which it was

done.

1818

PLACES VISITED-London, Sussex.

EXHIBITED -

ROYAL ACADEMY—Landscape, Breaking up of a shower; three other Landscapes and two Drawings, A Gothic Porch and a Group of Elms. (See under 1817.)

BRITISH GALLERY-A Cottage in a Cornfield. (See

PICTURES, etc.

South Kensington Museum-A Collage in a Cornfield (1631).

Possibly identical with the picture of 'A Cottage,' exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1817; cf. No. 828, the pencil study made about 1815. Bought in at the Constable Sale, 1838 (No. 52), for 26 guineas. Mezzotinted by David Lucas.

Churchyard at Finden, Sussex (267). Dated June 28th.

Houses on Putney Heath (172). Dated August 13th. Water-Colour.

Richmond Bridge (264). Dated September 9th; cf. No. 826. September 8th. Pencil. Copy of an Etching by Ruysdael (258).

Pen and Sepia. THE LOUVRE, PARIS—A Cottage (No 889). 202 x 161.

Possibly the picture exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1823.

Exhibited 77 CORNHILL, 1899-Fine Evening under the Water-Colour. Cliffs (No. 116). Dated August 1st. Water Putney Heath (No. 109). Dated August 13th. Water-Colour.

PLACES VISITED-London, Suffolk.

EXHIBITED-

ROYAL ACADEMY-A Scene on the River Stour. (See below.)

1819

BRITISH GALLERY-Osmington Shore near Weymouth. (See below.) A Mill. (See below.)

PICTURES, etc.

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM—*View at East Bergholt, Suffolk (130). Oil.

The west end of Bergholt Church; cf. Pencil

Drawing No. 265.

*Weymouth Bay (330).

Mezzotinted by David Lucas. Perhaps a preliminary study for the picture exhibited at the British Gallery. The picture in the Louvre is dated 1827 in the Catalogue, and is accordingly entered here as belonging to that date, though from the style it might well be earlier.

J. PIERPONT MORGAN, Esq.—A Scene on the River Stour (The White Horse). 51 × 73. Signed and dated. Oil. This picture, exhibited at the Royal Academy, and bought by Archdeacon Fisher for 100 guineas, gained a gold medal at Lille in 1826. Sold at Constable's Sale in 1838 for 150 guineas, and anonymously, in 1855, for 600 guineas. Bought by Messrs. Agnew in 1894 for 6200 guineas. A fine oil sketch for the composition, without the horse and barge, is in the possession of Alexander Young, Esq. Mezzotinted on a small scale by David Lucas.

T. HORROCKS MILLER, Esq. -* Dedham Mill, Essex,

Either this or the very similar picture at South Kensington (No. 34), dated 1820, must have been the work exhibited at the British Gallery in this year.

1820

PLACES VISITED-London, Salisbury, Dorsetshire, Warwickshire. EXHIBITED-

ROYAL ACADEMY-Stratford Mill on the River Stour. (See below.)

A View of Harwich Lighthouse. (See below.)

PICTURES, etc.

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM-Dedham Mill, Essex (34). Signed and dated.

Possibly identical with the Mill exhibited at the British Gallery in 1819. Either this work or Mr. T. H. Miller's picture (see under 1819) was sold at the Constable Sale, 1838 (No. 80), for 43 guineas. Sheepshanks Gift. For engravings see Appendix A. Farm Buildings and a Bridge (296). Dated July 13th

Stonehenge, Wills (309). Dated July 15th. Pencil. Salisbury Cathedral (619). Dated July 20th. Pencil. A Cart at Gillingham, Dorset (293). Dated July 21st. Pencil.

Entrance into Gillingham (820). Dated July 30th. Cottages and Trees, New Forest (297). Dated August

Pencil. A Road leading into Salisbury (262). Dated August

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM (continued)—	
View near Salisbury (261). Dated August 20th.	1
Pen	cil.
West Door of Salisbury Cathedral (279). Da August 22nd. Pen	cil.
Trees and Wattles, Hampstead (310). Dated Septe ber 7th.	icil.
Knowle Hall, Warwickshire (617). Dated Septem 13th. Per	icil.
Fir Trees at Hampstead (251). Dated October 2n Per	d. icil.
A Bridge at Hendon (271). Dated October 8th. Per	ncil.
	Oil.
Salisbury Cathedral (319).	Oil.
Sunset Study, Hampstead (147). Dated October 1	7th. Oil.
*Water Meadows near Salisbury (38). Leslie relates how this picture was rejected by Royal Academy when Constable himself was on Hanging Committee.	Oil. the
TATE GALLERY, MILLBANK—*Harwich: Sea and Linhouse (1276).	ght- Oil.
Probably identical with the picture exhibited a	the
Royal Academy. The original pencil sketch South Kensington (No. 302) was made in Au 1815.	gust
Sir Samuel Montagu, Bart Stratford Mill on	the Oil.
River Stour. 50 × 72. The picture exhibited at the Royal Academ	ny in
1820. Painted for Mr. Tinney, Archdeacon Fisl solicitor, at the price of £105. Sold at the I	her's
Sale in 1895 for £8925. Mezzotinted on a l	arge
scale by Lucas, with the title of 'The You	Jung

Waltonians,' and etched by Brunet Debaines. GEORGE SALTING, Esq. -* Malvern Hall, Warwickshire, 19 × 292

This charming sketch is in all probability a pre-liminary study for the Academy picture of the subject exhibited in 1822.

1821

PLACES VISITED-London, Newbury, Reading, Abingdon, Oxford, Salisbury.

EXHIBITED-

S

ROYAL ACADEMY—Landscape: Noon (The Hay-Wain) (see below); Hampstead Heath (see below); A Shower; Harrow.

PICTURES, etc.

NATIONAL GALLERY-The Hay-Wain (1207). Signed and dated. Sold to a Frenchman in 1824 with two other pictures

for £250. Obtained a gold medal at the Salon of 1824. Sold in 1866 (G. Young Sale) for 1300 guineas. Presented to the National Gallery by Mr. Henry Vaughan. The more vigorous and brilliant full-sized sketch for it is at South Kensington (987-1900) For Engravings see Appendix A.

A Watermill at Newbury, Berks (285). Dated June Pencil and Wash On the Canal near Newbury, Berks (283). Pencil and Wash. View at Newbury, Berks (246). Dated June 5th. Pencil and Wash The Abbey Gate, Reading (286). Dated June 5th. Pencil. View of Reading from the River (287). Dated June Pencil Abingdon from the River (618). Dated June 7th. Bridge at Abingdon (282). Dated June 7th. Pencil. A Ruin near Abingdon, Berks (288). Dated June 7th. Blenheim Palace and Park (355). Dated June 8th. Pencil Cart and Team (353). Dated August 21st. Pencil.
Study of Sky and Trees (151). Dated September 3rd. Study of Sky and Trees (156). Dated September 12th Oil Study of Sky and Trees (162). Dated September 12th. Study of Sky and Trees (167). Dated September 24th. Cart and Team (839). Dated September 27th. Pencil. Study of Sky and Trees (168). Dated October 2nd.

South Kensington Museum-On the Canal near

Newbury, Berks (284). Dated June 4th.
Pencil and Wash

Near Hampstead (781). Dated October 13th. Oil. View at Hampstead Heath (164). Dated November

Salisbury Cathedral (797). Dated November 12th (?). Pencil and Water-Colour Old Houses at Harnham Bridge, Salisbury (218).

Dated November 14th. Water-Colour. Dated November 14th. W Cf. 1829 British Museum No. 29.

Study of Sky and Trees (157).
*Trees near Hampstead Church (1630).
*Study of Cirrus Clouds (784). Cf. No. 157. Oil. BRITISH MUSEUM—Cottage near Reading (26b). (Cf. No. 26a). Dated June 6th.

High Street, Oxford (17). Dated June 9th. Pencil and Wash. TATE GALLERY, MILLBANK-* The Salt-Box, Hamp-

stead 1236). Perhaps identical with the 'Hampstead Heath' exhibited at the Royal Academy. *View on Hampstead Heath (1237). *The Bridge at Gillingham (1244). Oil. Cf. South Kensington sketches made in 1820, also

the picture of Stratford St. Mary bought by Messrs. Colnaghi at Christie's, March 2, 1901 (Martineau Sale) for 720 guineas.

1822

PLACES VISITED-London, Norfolk (?). EXHIBITED-

ROYAL ACADEMY-Hampstead Heath; A View on the Stour near Dedham (see below); Malvern Hall,

Warwickshire (see under 1820); A View of the Terrace, Hampstead; A Study of Trees from Nature. BRITISH GALLERY—The Haywain.

PICTURES, etc.

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM—Landscape with Figures (165). Dated July 30th.
View at Hampstead (336). Dated July 31st.
Oil.
View at Hampstead (337). Dated July 31st.
Oil.
Study of Clouds (590). Dated September 5th.
Oil.
In a letter to Fisher, dated October 7th, 1822,
Constable says, 'I have made about fifty careful studies of skies, tolerably large to be careful.'

studies of skies, tolerably large to be careful.\(^*\) Study of Sky and Trees, Hampstead? (159). Oil.\(^*\) View at Hampstead Hanh (123). Oil.\(^S\) Similar to the mezzotint by Lucas taken from 'a picture in the possession of Edwin Bullock, Esq.\(^1\) (1855). Mr. Bullock's Collection was sold in 1870. T. HORROCKS MILLER, Esq.\(^A\) View on the Slour

near Dedham (Flatford), 51 × 73\frac{1}{2}.

The picture exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1822. It is still in a remarkably good condition, and shows perhaps what Constable's colour was really like, better than works that have been kept for years in London. The first pencil-sketch of the subject may be seen in one of the sketch-books at South Kensington (No. 1250), and dates from the year 1815. The composition has been engraved by W. R. Smith and by David Lucas.

SIR CHARLES TENNANT, BART, — Yarmouth Jetty. 13 × 20. Signed and dated. Oil.

In style remarkably like the 'Harwich' painted in 1820. The plate of the subject by Lucas is taken from another sketch, possibly that sold at Christie's in 1901, and now in France. Constable gave another 'Yarmouth' to the Frenchman who bought his 'Haywain' in 1824. Sold 1847 (Oldnall Sale) for 60 guineas, and in 1894 (Gibbons Sale) for 490 guineas.

at the Constable Sale 1838 for 61 guineas. Two other versions have been lent to Burlington House, one 29x 35½ in 1893 by Mr. E. L. Raphael, the other (dated 1826) 34 × 43½ in 1895 by Mr. S. G. Holland. The smaller one was perhaps that painted for Mr. Mirehouse. One version, nearly finished, was sold at the Constable Sale in 1838, lot 30. For engravings see Appendix A. Study at Hampstead—Evening (154). Dated August

Study at Hampstead—Evening (154). Dated August 6th. Oil. Salisbury Cathedral (281). Dated August 20th.

Sherborne Church, Dorset (394). Dated September 2nd. Pencil.
Study of Trees—Evening (152). Dated October 4th.

The Cenotaph, Cole-Orton (835). Dated November 28th. Pencil and Wash.

Original Sketch for the picture exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1836. View in the Grove, Cole-Orton (815). Dated Novem-

ber 28th. Pencil and Wash. Cf. the similar sketch, No. 266.

Trees in Leicestershire (in lane leading to Ferrer's Hall) (356).

BRITISH MUSEUM — Landscape Study (11a). Dated April 20th.

Bentley, Suffolk (9). Dated April 21st.

Study of an Ash Tree, Hampstead (13a). Dated June

21st. Pencil.

At Hampstead (20b). Dated June 26th.

Water-Colour.

*View at Hampstead Heath (122). Oil.

*The Grove, Hampstead (137). Oil.

Cf. 1832, National Gallery (1246), 'A House at

Hampstead.'
THE LOUVRE, PARIS — *Hampstead Heath (892).

10\frac{1}{2} \times 14\frac{1}{2}.

Oil.

MESSRS. OBACH & Co.—*Hampstead Heath. 17\frac{1}{2} \times 25.

Cf. National Gallery Sketch, No. 1813 above.

1823

PLACES VISITED—London, Southgate, Suffolk, Salisbury, Gillingham, Sherborne, Fonthill, Cole-Orton.

EXHIBITED-

ROYAL ACADEMY—Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop's Garden (see below); A Study of Trees; a Sketch; A Cottage (see under 1818).

BRITISH GALLERY—Yarmouth Jetty.

Probably Sir Charles Tennant's picture, dated 1822. In 1823 Constable painted two portraits for Lady

Dysart. PICTURES, etc.

NATIONAL GALLERY—*View on Hampstead Heath
(1813)
Oil.

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM—Salisbury Cathedral (33). Signed and dated. Oil. The picture exhibited at the Royal Academy. Painted for Bishop Fisher but refused by him. Sold

1824

PLACES VISITED—London, Suffolk, Brighton.

ROYAL ACADEMY—A Boat Passing a Lock. (See below.)
PARIS SALON—The Haywain (see under 1821); A
View near London; A Lock on the Stour.

PICTURES, etc.

Dated August 3rd.

NATIONAL GALLERY—* The Gleaners (1817). Oil.
*Sheich of a Landscape (1824).

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM—On the Beach, Brighton
(782). Dated June 10th. Oil.
The Beach at Brighton (783). Dated June 12th. Oil.

Brighton Beach with Colliers (591). Dated July 19th.
Oil.
Brighton Beach (148). Dated July 19th.
Oil.
The Beach at Brighton (335). Dated July 22nd.
Oil.
A Mill near Brighton (Smock or Tower Mill) (149).

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM (continued)-*A Windmill near Brighton (158).
*Coast Scene with Fishing Boats, ? Brighton (129). Oil. Oil

*Coast Scene with Shipping in the Distance, ? Seaford (120). * Windmill and Houses (126). Oil. *Study near the Coast, ? Brighton (155). *Willy Lott's House (166). Oil.

Mezzotinted, with some variations, by David

*The Opening of Waterloo Bridge (322). Possibly the picture mentioned (Leslie, Chap. viii.) as 'a small balloon to let off as a forerunner of the

larger one. See under 1817 and 1832.
CHARLES MORRISON, Esq.—*The Lock.* 56×47½. Oil.
Purchased at the Royal Academy of 1824 by Mr. Morrison. Engraved by S. W. Reynolds. The picture is in a wonderful state of preservation. A picture is in a wonderful state of preservation. A magnificent oil sketch (55 x 47), which appeared to have been made on the top of another finished picture of the same subject, was sold at Christie's (A. E. Leatham Sale, May 1301) for 1300 guineas, (A. E. Leatnam Sale, May 1901) for 1905 guineas, and is now (1902) in the possession of Messrs. Agnew. In 1852 this sketch fetched only 220 guineas. A replica of 'The Lock' made in 1825 was sold at Constable's Sale for 125 guineas, and in the catalogue is confused with the Academy picture. From this replica Lucas is stated to have made his large mezzotint. For oblong versions of the subject see under 1825. For engravings see Appendix A.

C. A. BARTON, Esq. (Sold, May 3rd, 1902, for 420 guineas)—*Brighton Beach. 12×16½. Oil.

A composition similar to that engraved by Lucas but not identical with it. A larger version of the subject, more heavily glazed, with an additional boat and figures, is in the possession of Mr. Lionel Phillips. The picture engraved by Lucas is probably that now in the possession of Mr. George Salting. Mr. Salting has also a companion picture, of about the same date, 'Noon, West End Fields, Hampstead,' similar to the Lucas print of that

Full-sized study for the picture in the Diploma Gallery. If the two works are compared, several changes in the composition will be noticed. The willow stump was moved to the left of the horse after the picture had been exhibited at the Academy.
Bequeathed by Mr. Henry Vaughan in 1900.

BRITISH MUSEUM-Harwich (1), Signed and dated J. C., October 29th. DIPLOMA GALLERY, BURLINGTON HOUSE-Dedham

Lock or The Leaping Horse. Oil.

The picture exhibited at the Royal Academy in

1825, and, perhaps, Constable's grandest painting. Two studies in Chalk and Indian Ink for the composition are in the British Museum (Nos. 10a and 10b), and the full-sized oil sketch is at South Kensington (see above). The title 'Dedham Lock' is misleading. Dedham Lock is really close to Dedham village. There is no lock at all visible in the picture, and Dedham itself is only seen in the distance. Sold, 1853 (Birch Sale), for 375 guineas. An interesting picture from the Collection of the late W. Lockwood, now (1902) on loan at the Notting-ham Art Gallery, repeats the left-hand portion of nam Art Gallery, repeats the left-hand portion of the composition. From its size (55½ × 47) it may have been originally intended to be a companion to 'The Lock?' In style it is somewhat earlier than the larger work at Burlington House, and was pro-bably painted about 1824. Etched by William Hole, R.S.A.

A Lock. Signed and dated. Presented by Artist in 1829 on his election to the membership of the Royal Academy. Though dated 1826, the style indicates that the picture may have been begun several years before. Constable speaks in a letter of being engaged on two pictures of 'A Lock' during this year. Lady Tate has a smaller variant of the subject which has been excellently mezzotinted by Mr. Frank Short.

1825

PLACES VISITED - London, Croydon, Brighton, Harwich.

EXHIBITED-

ROYAL ACADEMY-Dedham Lock or The Leaping Horse (see below), and two other Landscapes, bought by Mr. Francis Darby of Coalbrookdale.

BRITISH INSTITUTION—The White Horse (see under 1819) and Stratford Mill (see under 1820).

LILLE-The White Horse.

In 1825 Constable painted an upright group of three children with a donkey, the grandchildren of a Mr. Lambert of Woodmanstone. A rough sketch of the composition is still preserved among the family papers.

PICTURES, etc.

South Kensington Museum-The Leaping Horse

1826

PLACES VISITED-Brighton, London, Suffolk.

EXHIBITED-

ROYAL ACADEMY-The Cornfield (see below) and another Landscape.

PICTURES, etc.

NATIONAL GALLERY-The Cornfield (130). Engraved by David Lucas. Presented to the nation in 1837 by a committee of the Painter's friends. For engravings see Appendix A. *A Country Lane (1821).

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM-*A Donkey Browsing (790 The original study for the donkey in 'The Cornfield.

*Study of Foliage (338). G. Salting, Esq.—Sea and Sky, Brighton. Dated Sunday, January 1st. Oil.

PLACES VISITED-Hampstead, Suffolk.

EXIIIBITED-

ROYAL ACADEMY-The Marine Parade and Chain Pier, Brighton, 49 x 72.

Formerly in the possession of the Rev. T. Sheep-

shanks. Engraved in line by F. Smith.

A Water Mill at Gillingham, Dorselshire. (See below.) Hampstead Heath. (See below.)

BRITISH INSTITUTION-The Cornfield (see under 1826); The Glebe Farm (see below).

PICTURES, etc.

NATIONAL GALLERY-The Glebe Farm (1274). Engraved by David Lucas. Sold at the Constable Sale in 1838 (No. 70) for 71 guineas. Bought in at the Constable Sale 1863 for 780 guineas. Bequeathed to the Nation by Miss Constable in 1888. The picture was begun in 1826. For engravings see Appendix A.

The Glebe Farm (1823). Probably a preliminary version of the above. Bequeathed by Mr. Henry Vaughan. Cf. also the smaller study of the subject at South Kensington (No. 161).

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM—Hampstead Heath (36).

Sheepshanks gift. The Museum Catalogue states that this picture was exhibited in 1827, but judging from the style it must have been executed five or six years earlier. Cf. 'The Salt-Box' in the Tate

Oak in Dedham Meadows (802). Dated October 6th.

Water Lane, Stratford (624). Pencil and Fore-Part of a Barge, Flatford (834). Willow Trees in Flatford Meadows (837, 838). Pencil and Wash. Pencil. Pencil.

* Landscape Study, The Glebe Farm (161). An early study for the picture. Painted about 1825.

Heath Scene, Hampstead? (125). Oil. * View at Hampstead, Sunset (339).

THE LOUVRE, PARIS-Weymouth Bay (891). 342 × 44.

Sold in 1870 (Bullock Sale) for 510 guineas, and in 1872 (Gillott Sale) for 700 guineas. For a sketch of the subject see under 1819. A smaller version, 21 x 29\frac{3}{2}, was sold in 1879 (Fuller-Maitland Sale) for 150 guineas. A large sketch of the place with a less gloomy sky is in the possession of Mr. George Salting.

C. A. BARTON, Esq. (Sold, May 3rd, 1902, for 1150 guineas).—A Watermill at Gillingham, Dorsetshire. 19×23.

From the collection of Mr. Lewis Fry. The picture exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1827. It may however have been started when Constable It may nowever have been started water contacts wisted Gillingham in 1820, since it is thinly painted on a brown ground in the manner of 'The White Horse.' Constable mentions in 1823 that he made 'one or two attacks on the old mill.' The upright picture (No. 1632) at South Kensington, from which Lucas made his engraving, is more highly finished, and altogether more mature in style. It was bought

in for 36 guineas at the Constable Sale in 1838, and was bequeathed to the Nation by Miss Constable fifty years later.

PALAIS DES BEAUX ARTS, LILLE. *A Country Road with figures, 6 × 8.

I know of this sketch only through notes kindly supplied by Mr. H. P. Horne, while this list was in the press. But Constable's work is so rare in Continental galleries that this example deserves to be recorded.

1828

PLACES VISITED-London, Suffolk, Brighton. FYHIRITED

ROYAL ACADEMY-Dedham Vale (see below); Hampstead Heath (bought by Chantrey).

PICTURES, etc.

NATIONAL GALLERY-* A Summer Afternoon after a Shower (1815). Oil.
Mezzotinted by David Lucas. The sketch is said to have been made on a journey to Brighton.

* Dedham (1820). SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM - A Partly Ruined

Church, Hove? (294). Dated May 26th. Pencil. Cf. No. 207. Pen and Water-Colour, c. 1834. View on the Coast, Vessels Ashore (350). Dated May 30th Sepia.

Cf. Nos. 199a and 199b. * A Mill near Brighton (588). Oil. Mezzotinted by David Lucas.

Mezzotinted by David Edita.

Sir Audley Neeld, Bart.—Dedham Vale. 56×48.

Oil.

The picture exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1828. Sold at the Constable Sale, 1838, for 100 guineas; at the Taunton Sale, 1846, for 340 guineas; and at the Taunton Sale, 1849, for 150 guineas. The original study for the composition was made as early as 1802, and is at South Kensington. Versions of the subject which I cannot identify were sold in 1858 (C. Morgan Sale) for £152, 10s., and in 1859 for 188 guineas. Another picture, 25\(\frac{1}{2}\) 49\(\frac{1}{2}\) fetched 300 guineas at the Fuller-Maitland Sale in 1879, and still another was sold at the Constable Sale in 1891 for 490 guineas. For engravings see Appendix A.

1820

PLACES VISITED-London, Salisbury.

EXHIBITED-

ROYAL ACADEMY-Hadleigh Castle (said now to be in America); A Cottage.

PICTURES, etc.	Mrs. J. M. Keiller-A Dell in Helmingham Park.
SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM—View near Salisbury (153). View in the Close, Salisbury (334). View near Salisbury (210). Dated July 18th. Water-Colour. Archdeacon Fisher and his Dogs (206). Dated July 22nd. Pen and Water-Colour. Salisbury Cathedral and Cottages (315). Dated July 25th. Cf. No. 227, Water-Colour. View at Salisbury (253). Dated November 13th and 14th. Pen and Sepia. Old Houses at Salisbury (254). Dated November 20th. **Old Sarum (163). Mezzotinted by David Lucas. Cf. No. 1628, the water-colour exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1834. This study may possibly be two or three years later in date than Mr. Horne's pencil sketch. (See below.) **On the Skirts of a Wood (788). BRITISH MUSEUM—Oval Landscape, after Swanevelt (2). Dated Hampstead, May 12th. Pen and Ink. A Village on a River (33). Dated November 19th. Water-Colour. A Bridge (29). Dated November 23rd. Pen and Water-Colour. A Sketch at Harnham. Cf. 1821, South Kensing-	Gil. The picture exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1830. Sold at the Constable Sale in 1838 for 54 guineas; at the Scovell Sale, 1883, for 900 guineas; and at the M'Connell Sale, 1886, for 900 guineas; and at the M'Connell Sale, 1886, for £2400. The composition was engraved on a small scale by Lucas. A smaller version of the subject, apparently painted before 1810, was (January 1902) in the possession of Messrs. Leggatt of Cheapside. It corresponds with the Lucas print more exactly than with the large picture. This may be the large sketch which Constable speaks of 'toning' in 1823, for it is a dark and rather heavy picture. ARTHUR KAY, Esq.—Distant View of Woodford Church. 6×73. Water-Colour. GEORGE SALTING, Esq.—*Poell in Helmingham Park. Oil. A study of a tree-trunk leaning across a hollow in the ground. The forcible impasto gives it a curiously modern look. It forms no part of the larger composition.
ton, No. 218.	-0
University Galleries, Oxford—* A View near Salisbury. 12½ × 14½. Oil.	1831
A study of a group of trees, in one of the gardens by the Close, which appears in the Kensington	PLACES VISITED—London, Suffolk, Epsom. EXHIBITED—
sketches of this year. H. P. HORNE, Esq.—Old Sarum. Dated July 20th. Pencil.	ROYAI, ACADEMY—Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows (see below); Yarmouth Pier. (Could this have been Sir Charles Tennant's picture of 1822?)
Apparently the original sketch from which both the oil-study above mentioned and the large water-	PICTURES, etc.
colour exhibited in 1834 were made. GEORGE SALTING, Esq.—* Salisbury Cathedral from the Avon. Oil. A large sketch of extraordinary force.	NATIONAL GALLERY—*Salisbury (1814). A preliminary study, without the rainbow, for the picture exhibited at the Royal Academy. *Stoke-by-Nayland (1819). One of many studies for the composition mezzotinted by Lucas about 1832, and for the large picture of the subject he meditated in 1836. Cf. South Kensington, No. 150. A large painting of this subject (48 × 56) was sold at the J. Nield Sale in May 1879 for 777 guineas, but I have been unable to trace its further history. Leslie says distinctly that no large picture of the subject was ever painted
1830	by Constable.
PLACES VISITED-London, Essex.	SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM—A Dog Watching a Water Rat (235). Dated August 1st.
EXHIBITED-	Water-Colour.
ROYAL ACADEMY—A Dell in Helmingham Park (see below); A View of Hampstead Heath (see below); A Landscape, small.	The Root of a Tree, Well Walk (352). Dated September 22nd. A Plough at Epsom (304). Dated September 24th. Pencil.
PICTURES, etc.	Mr. Digby Neave's Villa at Epsom (236).
South Kensington Museum—Hampstead Heath (35).	Water-Colour, Landscape Sketch, Epsom? (238). Water-Colour,

Landscape Sketch, Epsom? (238). Water-Colour.
*View at Stoke-by-Nayland (150). Oil.
Neither this nor the foregoing appear to be sketches from nature, but compositions based on studies previously made. Cf. No. 261-76.

THE LOUVRE, PARIS—*The Rainbow (No. 890). 101×251. Oil.

OUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM—Hampstead Heath (35).
Signed on the back.
Oil.
The picture exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1830. Possibly begun two or three years earlier.
Study of Clouds, Hampstead? (240). Dated September 5th.
Water-Colour.
*Study of Tree Stems (323).
Oil.
*Landscape with Figures (787).
Oil.

Mrs. ASHTON Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows.

The picture exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1831. It was sold at the Constable's death a committee of his friends contemplated buying this picture from his family and presenting it to the Nation. The boldness of its execution, however, stood in its way, and 'The Cornfield' was purchased instead. For some reasons this is to be regretted, since in no other picture is the dramatic side of Constable's art so forcibly and so splendidly expressed. Nowadays, too, it is difficult to understand why its execution should have frightened Constable's friends, for it is one of the most carefully painted of his later works, and contains if anything too much detail rather than too little. A preliminary study for it is in the National Gallery, No. 1814 (see above). For engravings see Appendix A.

1832

PLACES VISITED—London, Suffolk, Berkshire, Bucks (?).

EXHIBITED-

ROYAL ACADEMY—The Opening of Waterloo Bridge (see below); Sir Richard Steele's Cottage, Hampstead (engraved by Lucas); A Romantic House, Hampstead (see below); Moonlight; and four Drawings, including Jaques and the Wounded Stag (see below).

PICTURES, etc.

NATIONAL GALLERY—A House at Hampstead (1246).

The picture exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1832. The house is that still standing in The Grove Hampstead, of which another sketch is at South Kensington (No. 137). Bequeathed to the Nation by Miss Constable in 1888. Etched by H. R. Robertson.

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM—A Barn and Trees with a White Horse (221). Dated July 31st.

Pen and Water-Colour.

Cottages at East Bergholt, Suffolk (232). Dated July
31st. Pen and Water-Colour.

Cf. Nos. 212, 228, and 237.

Englefield House, Berkshire (345). Dated August 24th.

Water-Colour.

Cf. Nos. 255, 1258, 1258a, 1258b.
Studies for the picture exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1833.

Landscape with Trees, Hampstead? (597). Dated September. Mater-Colour. A Cottage at East Bergholt (229). Dated November 31st. Pen and Water-Colour.

British Museum—Cottage in a Landscape (19a). Dated July 31st. Water-Colour. Theal, Berkshire (25a). Dated August 25th.

Pen and Water-Colour.
Sir Charles Tennant, Bart.—The Opening of Waterloo Bridge, June 18th, 1817. 51×85. Oil.

The picture exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1832. Sold at the Constable Sale, 1838, for 63 guineas, and in 1833 (Birch Sale) for 240 guineas. The picture caused Constable much difficulty, and he spent many years upon it. It is remarkable for the freedom with which the palette-knife is used in the foreground, and for the legend of its having been 'toned' with blacking, which the present condition of the picture proves to be little more than a legend. See also under 1817 and 1824. Another version, perhaps a sketch, measuring 60 × 80, fetched 410 guineas at the Fenton Sale in 1899. This may possibly be identical with the sketch which fetched 2000 guineas at the Goldsmid Sale in 1896. A picture or pictures of the subject, belonging to Mr. G. R. Burnett, were sold in 1872, 300 guineas, and 1882, 92 guineas,

ARTHUR KAY, Esq.—Jaques and the Wounded Stag. 9×13. Water-Colour.

Perhaps the drawing exhibited at the Royal Academy. Engraved, with slight variations, by David Lucas. Formerly in the possession of C. R. Leslie, R.A. Other studies may be seen in the British Museum (No. 4, Pen and Ink), and at South Kensington (No. 795, Water-Colour). The former, an upright design, was engraved on wood by S. Williams.

JAMES ORROCK, Esq.—*The Gamekeeper's Cottage. 33\$ × 42.

On the back, 'Sketch by Constable of his father's mill at East Bergholt.' The mill seen in the distance is probably that which forms the principal object of the 'Spring' (see under 1814). This picture excited much controversy when exhibited at Burlington House (see Appendix D).

EDWARD GAMBIER HOWE, Esq. - A Winter Scene.

A copy from the picture by Ruysdael in the Peel Collection. Made in September 1832, and used to illustrate Constable's third lecture at the Royal Institution in 1836. Sold at the Constable Sale in 1838 for 15 guineas.

1833

PLACES VISITED-London, Suffolk, Folkestone.

EXHIBITED-

ROYAL ACADEMY—Englefield House, Berkshire: Morning (see below); A Heath (see below): Showery Noon (see below); Cottage in a Cornfield; Sunset; and three Water-Colours, An Old Farm House; A Miller's House; A Windmill: Squally Day (perhaps the 'Windmill near Colchester' engraved by Lucas).

PICTURES, etc

NATIONAL GALLERY-*View at Hampstead (1275).

Oil.

Possibly identical with the picture of 'A Heath,' exhibited at the Royal Academy. Bequeathed to the Nation by Miss Constable in 1888.

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM-Trees at West End Fields, Hampstead (273). Dated July 5th. Pencil.
Study of Sky Effect: Hampstead? (202). Dated
September 26th. Water-Colour. London from Hampstead (220). Dated December 7th. Water-Colour.

ERITISH MUSEUM - Folkestone from the Sea (30a). Water-Colour. Dated October 16th. Cf. No. 30b, also 1835, South Kensington, No.

Mrs. R. BENYON-Englefield House, Berkshire: Morn

ing. $40\frac{1}{2} \times 51\frac{1}{2}$. Oil.

The picture exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1833. Studies for it, made in August 1832, may be seen at South Kensington (Nos. 345, 255, 1258, 1258a, 1258b). It is said to have been slightly reduced in size by the original owner, Mr. Benyon de Beauvoir, to fit its present frame. The house is seen under a sullen, thundery sky, an effect unusual with the artist, who is reported to have described the work as 'a picture of a summer morning, including a house.' A similar story is told, with more probability, of the 'Malvern Hall.' (See under 1820.)

1834

PLACES VISITED-London, Arundel, Chichester, Petworth.

EXHIBITED-

ROYAL ACADEMY-The Mound of the City of Old Sarum. (See below.) Wate Stoke Pogis Church, the Scene of Gray's 'Elegy. Water-Colour. Water-Colour.

Bought by Mr. S. Rogers, (See below.)

An Interior of a Church, Water Water-Colour.

Bought by Mr. S. Rogers. A Study of Trees made in the Grounds of Charles Holford, Esq., at Hampstead.

Sold Constable Sale, 1838 (No. 62), £11. BRITISH GALLERY—A Cottage in a Field of Corn (? R.A. 1833); A Heath (?R.A. 1833); The Stour Valley, with Dedham and Harwich in the Distance (? R.A. 1828).

PICTURES, etc.

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM-Old Sarum (1628).

Water-Colour. The large drawing exhibited at the Royal Academy in this year. Both this drawing and the oil sketch mezzotinted by Lucas (No. 163) were made from a sketch done in 1829 (q.v.).

Cows at Hampstead (219). Dated April.

Water-Colour. Well Walk, Hampstead (175). Dated April 12th. Water-Colour.

A Farm House and Church (211). Dated July 12th. Water-Colour. View at Houghton (208). Dated July 12th

Cf. Nos. 222, 226, 230, and 234.

A Windmill and Cottage (204). Dated July 15th. Pencil.

Water-Colour

Arundel Castle (277). Dated July 19th. Arvanaet Castale (27/). Dated July year.

A Pollard Willow, Ham (818). Pen and Ink.

Fittleworth Mill, Sussex (215). Dated September 23rd. Water-Colour. Cf. No. 176.

Fittleworth Mill and Bridge (273). Dated September Pencil. 23rd. Ruins of Cowdray, Suffolk (216). Water-Colour. Cf. No. 801, Petworth House.

A Barn (231).
*A Sluice on the Stour? (131). Water-Colour. *A Cottage and Sandbank (139). *A Rustic Building (133). *Stoke Pogis Church (174). Oil.

Probably a study for the drawing exhibited at the Royal Academy. Cf. British Museum, Nos. 35a and 35b. The sketches were perhaps made on Constable's return from Berkshire in 1832. Cf. the pencil sketches of Windsor and Eton, Nos. 275 and

British Museum—Bignor Park looking towards Petworth (27a). Dated July 10th. Water-Colour. North Stoke, Arundel (13c). Dated July 12th. Pencil. Petworth (27b). Dated July 14th. Water-Colour. Ruins of Cowdray, Interior (24). Dated September Water-Colour 14th

Cf. Nos. 23a, 12a, and 12b.

Tillington Church (23b). Dated September 17th Water-Colour.

*Designs for Gray's 'Elegy': Stoke Pogis Church (35a, Probably studies for the drawing exhibited at the

Royal Academy. Cf. South Kensington, No. 174.
Sir J. C. ROBINSON (Sold, April 21st, 1902)—Arundel Castle. 5 x 9. Sunday morning, July 20th.

PLACES VISITED—London, Arundel, Lutlehampton, Chichester, Isle of Wight (?), Worcester, Folkestone, Bergholt.

EXHIBITED-

ROYAL ACADEMY- The Valley Farm. (See below.)

PICTURES, etc.

NATIONAL GALLERY-The Valley Farm (327). The picture exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1835. Bought before exhibition by Mr. Vernon, by whom it was bequeathed to the Nation. Two oil studies for the picture, made about 1825, are at South Kensington, Nos. 140 and 143. (See below.) For engravings see Appendix A.

South Kensington Museum-Old Buildings at Arundel (272). Dated July 8th. P Arundel Mill and Castle (260). Dated July 9th.

Study for the picture exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1837.

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM (continued).

A Windmill near Arundel (312). Dated July 10th.

Cf. No. 313.

West End of Chichester Cathedral (615). Dated July A Sketch-Book with views of Arundel Castle, etc.

(316).

Worcester as seen from the North (314). Dated
Pencil

A Worcestershire Plough (836). Dated October 14th.

Folkestone (209). Dated October 16th.

Water-Colour. This date can hardly have been correctly read. Two days, before the time of railways, was hardly enough for a journey from Worcester, which Constable speaks of visiting in this year, to Folkestone.

Statule Speaks of visiting in this year, to Forkestone.
(See under 1833.)

*Landscape, with Water (140).

Sketch for the 'Valley Farm' (143).

From the style it would seem as if these two sketches had been made at least ten years before the exhibition of the picture.

*A Sandbank (327).

*A Study for 'The Valley Farm' (141). A larger version of this study (24 × 29) was sold at Christie's, February 23rd, 1901, for 370 guineas.

BRITISH MUSEUM—Stormy Effect: Littlehampton (18a).

Dated July 8th. Water-Colour. Dated July 8th.

Sir J. C. ROBINSON (Sold April 21, 1902)—Worcester
Cathedral from the River. 3\frac{1}{2} \times 6. Pencil.

Landscape with Cottages. 8\frac{3}{4} \times 11. Dated July 15th.

Freely handled, in marked contrast to the careful sketch of Worcester.

1836

PLACES VISITED-London, Suffolk (?). EXHIBITED

ROYAL ACADEMY-The Cenotaph. (See below). Stonehenge, Wilts. (See below). Water Water-Colour. BRITISH GALLERY-The Valley Farm. (See under

PICTURES, etc.

NATIONAL GALLERY-The Cenotaph (1272). The picture exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1836. Sold at the Constable Sale, 1836 (No. 71), for 42 guineas. Bequeathed to the Nation by Miss Constable in 1888. The sketch for the picture was made in November 1823, and is now at South Kensington (No. 825). sington (No. 835).

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM — Stonehenge, Wilts (1620), Water-Colour. The drawing exhibited at the Royal Academy in this year. The original sketch for it is also at South Kensington (No. 800). Constable, in a letter dated September 14th, 1855, speaks of the large drawing as then just finished. Cf. also British Museum (22a.) A drawing in water-colour (14 x 22), which I saw some years ago, of 'Carisbrooke Castle from the Gatcombe Road,' handled in the same manner, shows that Constable must have visited the Isle of

BRITISH MUSEUM-The Mother (37a). Dated July 5th.

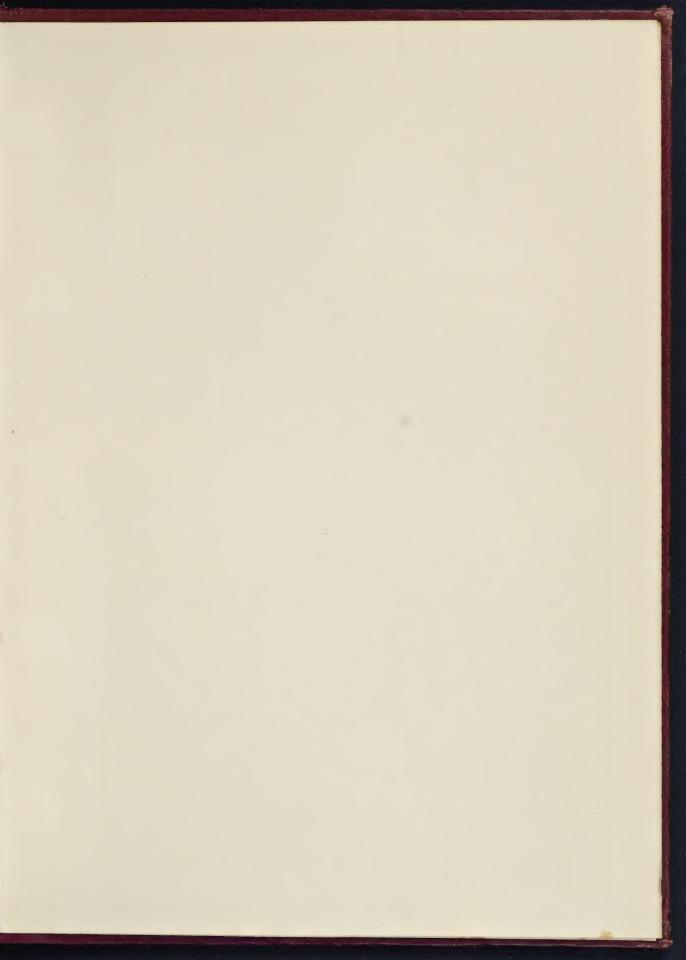
Wight about the year 1835.

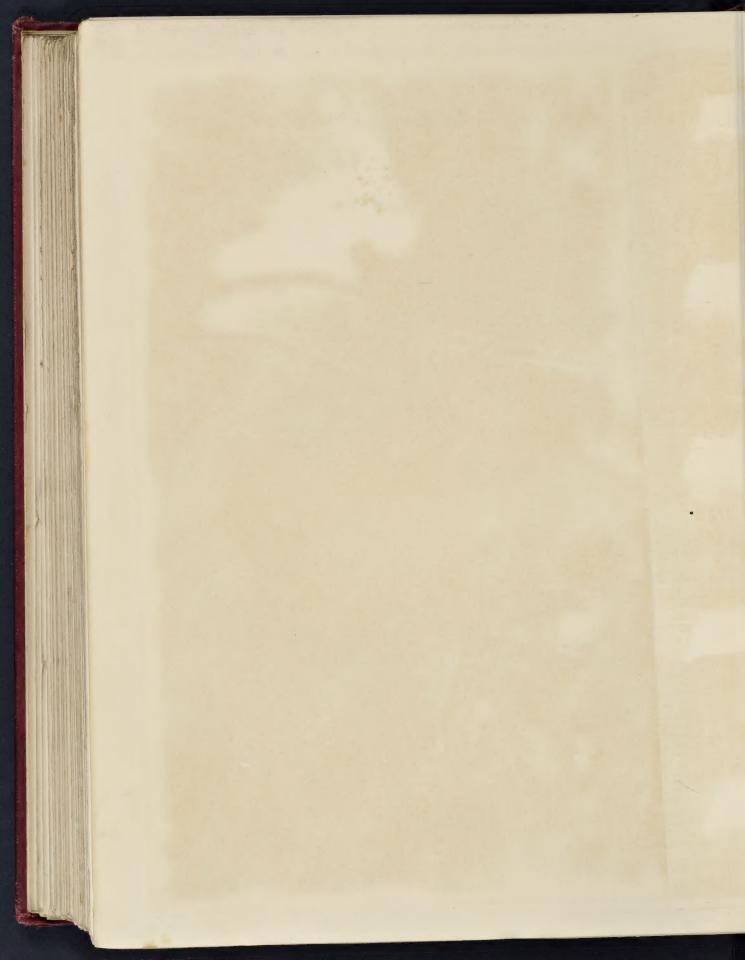
1837

PLACES VISITED-London.

ROYAL ACADEMY - Arundel Mill and Castle. The original sketch is dated July 9th, 1835, (q.v).

Constable was engaged on finishing this picture on the day of his death, March 31st, and it was considered by his friends to be sufficiently complete to be exhibited. At the Artist's Sale in 1838 it to be exhibited. At the Arther Sale in 1636 it fetched 75 guineas, but seems to have been bought in by the family as it was in the possession of Captain Constable in 187t. In 1885 it was exhibited at Burlington House by Mr. Holbrook Gaskell. Mezzotinted by David Lucas.





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